

**HELLOOO, TEXAS!** p.24 // **HIGHEST RAILS IN NEW YORK CITY** p.42



# *Travels of a* **Ten-Wheeler**

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Where Southern  
diesels met  
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*plus*

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Unforgettable  
night on an  
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FM diesels  
in Mexico p.66







## “PENNSY’S FAMOUS K4s PACIFIC”

One of 425 identical passenger locomotives

*Forrest Pirovano’s image of a K4s shows a locomotive which had widespread fame.*

If a steam locomotive was at the front of a Pennsylvania passenger train, chances are it was a K4s. The first one was built in 1914 and they remained in service until the end of steam. The famous “Broadway Limited” and other blue-ribbon passenger trains had K4s power up front. As trains got heavier, they would be double headed for more power. Pennsy had a real winner with these 80” drivered locomotives. The one pictured here, 3750, is preserved in a museum in Pennsylvania. This beautiful limited-edition print of an original illustration, individually numbered and signed by the artist, captures the stance of this famous locomotive.

This exquisite print is bordered by a museum-quality white-on-white double mat, measuring 11x14 inches. Framed in either a black or white 1 ½ inch deep wood frame, this limited-edition print measures 12 ¼ X 15 ¼ inches and is priced at only \$149. Matted but unframed the price for this print is \$109. Prices include shipping and packaging.

Forrest Pirovano is an artist on Cape Cod. His illustrations of famous steam locomotives are a love he has had since childhood. This illustration was created from original photographs of this locomotive by the artist.

**FORREST PIROVANO, artist**

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# This Issue



**On our cover**  
At Rock Springs, Wis.,  
near its Mid-Continent  
museum base, 4-6-0  
1385 works on C&NW  
rails in 1984. Chris Burger

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CHRIS BURGER

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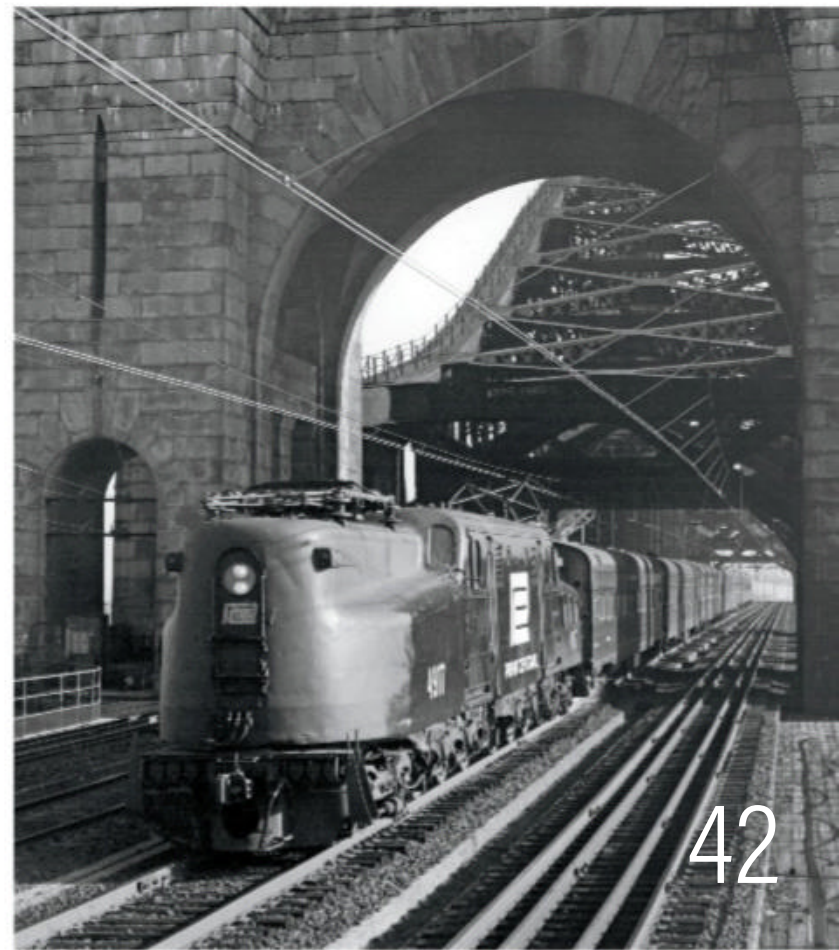
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# Camelot in Dairyland

**My friend and colleague Jim Wrinn** titled his 2000 book about the Southern Railway/Norfolk Southern steam program *Steam's Camelot*. The title references the legendary, probably mythical, era of England's King Arthur, a golden age and place of prosperity, happiness, and justice that flourished briefly and then vanished forever. It perfectly captures how many of us feel about the three-decade reign of 4501, 722, 610, 1218, et al.

Here in Wisconsin, we had our own, more fleeting Camelot of steam. It was largely the work of Chris Burger, who tells the story of Chicago & North Western's steam program in the latest installment of his "Best of Everything" series [page 16]. Although it didn't feature big engines hauling 20-car trains every weekend, C&NW's effort was the real thing, with public trips and other highly publicized events, like the annual Great Circus Train, which likely drew more people trackside than any SR/NS excursion.

But they weren't all high-profile moves. On August 2, 1987, I was driving out to put in some extra time at my then-current job. Not being in a hurry to get there on a sunny Sunday, I made a routine swing by C&NW's Butler Yard on the west edge of Milwaukee to see if anything interesting was there. Was there ever! Ten-Wheeler 1385 was just pulling out, joyfully clearing her cylinder cocks at the head a tidy three-car train. Fortunately, I had my camera with me. I raced ahead for a grab shot, then took to the freeway to reach a more distant, and more photogenic, location. That was St. Francis, historically the North Western's most important Milwaukee-area junction. Although the semaphores there had recently been replaced, St. Francis' tower remained in service, and had 1385's route to Chicago all lined up. I never did make it to the office that day.

Robert S. McGonigal  
EDITOR



**Sunday surprise: C&NW Ten-Wheeler 1385 steams past Milwaukee's St. Francis tower on August 2, 1987, en route to an event marking Chicago's sesquicentennial.** Robert S. McGonigal



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A potpourri of railroad history, then and now

# HeadEnd

WE MISS ...  
EMD and GE. The familiar builders' product  
lines continue, but under different names.

J. David Ingles, Brian Schmidt collection



## Local talent in Philly

When Philadelphia's commuter rolling stock was due for modernization in the early '60s, a highly qualified supplier was close at hand: The Budd Company. The hometown firm built 12 Rail Diesel Cars for use on Reading lines in 1962 (soon joined by 4 secondhanders), followed by 55 "Silverliner" electric multiple-unit cars (17 for RDG, 38 for Pennsy) in '63. All were publicly financed through SEPTA's predecessor agency. With City Hall's tower in the distance, outbound Silverliner 9017 meets inbound RDCs at Spring Garden Street station in June 1967. W. C. Janssen, Krambles-Peterson Archive



## Helper for a 3-car train

Winter at Hancock, in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, can be rough. It certainly was on January 17, 1967, when the temperature was 15 degrees below zero and 10 inches of new snow were falling. The conditions obliged Soo Line to have a GP9 assist two Milwaukee Road units in lifting the 3-car *Copper Country Limited* up 3 percent Quincy Hill. The two local boys looking on seem unfazed. James L. Alain

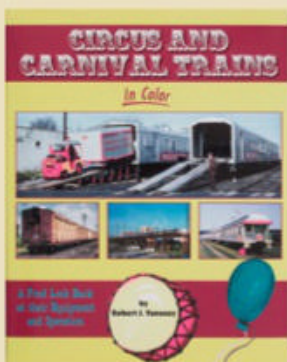
## DL&W club car restored

"Phoebe Snow" rides the back platform of the Whippany (N.J.) Railway Museum's Lackawanna subscription club car 2454 during its June 20 debut after a 7-year restoration. Built in 1912 and modified for M.U. operation in 1930, the car was used by wealthy clientele on Gladstone Branch suburban trains. Steve Hepler





## Reviews



### Circus and Carnival Trains in Color

By Robert J. Yanosey. Morning Sun Books, Avon-By-The-Sea, N.J. 128 pages, \$69.95.

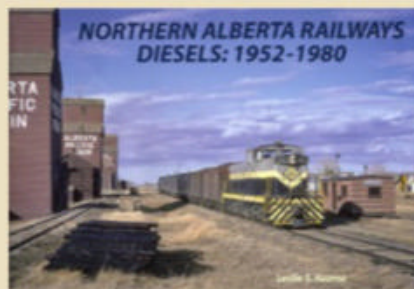
Author Yanosey has searched his photographic collection for the flamboyant circus and carnival equipment and trains of years past. Early pages show circus wagons and the unloading process. Then the book is divided into three sections covering the Ringling Brothers & Barnum & Bailey Combined Show, James E. Strates Show, and other shows that used trains. The format of these portions will be familiar to readers of Morning Sun's freight and passenger equipment book series. A final section, the last 26 pages, comprises action shots of circus trains through the years. Some of the photography is quite recent, reaching into the 21st century. — *Brian Schmidt*



### The Last Winter

By Frank Barry. Fresh Dirt Publications, www.frankbarryphotography.com. 64 pages, \$40.

As a Peace Corps worker in 1963, Frank Barry was posted to the perfect location in America for a steam fan. This was Chama, N.Mex., a remote division point on the Rio Grande narrow gauge, the nation's last long piece of all-steam railroad. Barry's time at Chama coincided with what turned out to be the final winter the D&RGW maintained service over the line; thereafter, operations were seasonal. Barry summarized this experience in our Winter 2005 issue's cover story. He expands on that in this beautiful oversized album containing more than 50 of his photos. Among the stunning images are a marvelous coming-and-going pair at Lobato taken from high up in a tree. — *Robert S. McGonigal*



### Northern Alberta Railways Diesels: 1952-1980

By Leslie S. Kozma. Alberta Pioneer Railway Association, Edmonton, Alta. 72 pages, \$40.

Forty years have passed since the dissolution of the Northern Alberta Railways into Canadian National. To mark the occasion, noted Canadian railfan and author Les Kozma has compiled the definitive record of NAR diesel locomotives. The book features mostly color images from a variety of photographers. It is split into four parts covering the development of the railroad's diesel fleet, inclusion in the larger CN network, colors and branding, and locomotive maintenance. Information includes data on locomotive builders' dieselization proposals, complete roster data, and locomotive painting and lettering diagrams. — *B.S.*

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## Shriners on the move!

Gatherings of the Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine, a.k.a. the Shriners, required some impressive special train movements. On October 20, 1934, *eight* gleaming Union Pacific 4-8-2s (two are hidden) are poised to depart Los Angeles' old Central Station with a like number of Shrine trains. Gerald M. Best







## SW1200RS to the rescue

Canadian National's SW1200RSs were not equipped with steam generators, yet here's CN 1229 hightailing through Clarkson, Ontario, with a passenger train on March 15, 1975. Back then, everything save scheduled passenger trains flew white extra flags; this was a rescue move with passengers aboard, likely train 650 out of London to Toronto. Apparently valuing movement over heat, London grabbed whatever power was handy to get 650 out of town. Douglas J. Fear



## Coast to coast at Baldwin

Engines destined for owners at opposite ends of the country receive finishing touches at the Baldwin Locomotive Works plant at Eddystone, Pa., in 1928. At left is Erie 2-8-4 3362; at right, Southern Pacific 4-8-8-2 4102. Would they ever meet again? H. L. Broadbelt collection



## Alco gets a GE cab

Southern Pacific C628 rear-ended another train while on lease to Louisville & Nashville in 1970. The casualties were a broken leg — and 7121's cab. Repaired with a General Electric cab, the Alco-GE hybrid rode Penn Central through Dayton, Ohio, on March 2, 1971. Left, John A. Kirk; right, David Oroszi

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## Jack Elwood, cover model



The late Jack Elwood (gray suit, gesturing with left arm) stands with two colleagues beside Amtrak train 710 at Fresno, Calif., in 1974 G. Mac Sebree, Krambles-Peterson Archive

I was most pleased and entertained by Jack Elwood's story "A Day on the Dead Horse Job" ["The Way it Was," page 88]. You also had his obituary listed on page 7. And you had him on the cover, too! He was promoted to Road Foreman of Engines on the Santa Fe and worked in this position in Gallup, N.Mex., and Fresno, Calif., and was my immediate supervisor at the latter location in the 1970s. Both of his sons followed in his footsteps and became locomotive engineers, as well. He was a fine railroader and will be fondly remembered.

*Phil Gosney, Castro Valley, Calif.*

### Coming in hot

I could feel the anxiety over trying to flag down the *Pan American* at Elizabethtown, Ky., in Phil Gosney's "The South Wind Doesn't Stop Here" [page 34]. Those old-head passenger engineers really knew how to make a station stop. An N&W engineer brought train 41 into Bristol, Va., one morning the same way, except by the time he stopped his lead E unit just short of the State Street crossing, the heavy brake application had ignited a fire under a Southern baggage car in the train. I recall the local fire department finally had to extinguish the last of the flames.

On the plus side, he arrived on time.

*Ron Flanary, Big Stone Gap, Va.*

### Working on the rail gang

I read John Dunham's article, "Teenage Trackman" with great interest. I worked the summers of 1966 and '67 on a B&O rail gang and could relate to many of his experiences. We worked laying ribbon rail. We were on the job all week, staying in camp cars, a shower car, a cook-cafeteria car, and a tank car that we swore was full of gravy because everything, including fried chicken, had gravy on it.

Our Pete Hagadorn was a guy by the name of Miller. He was leathery guy, always with a "chaw" of tobacco in his mouth (we assumed he slept with it). The other guys on the gang said if you weren't busy he'd have you out in a field doing push ups. We quickly learned that everything having to deal with track work was heavy, the railroad right of way was probably the hottest spot for miles around,

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and it was very dirty work. But, as John pointed out, by the time the summer was over, you were in great shape. We had a couple of college football players who were on the gang to stay in shape!

It was a memorable experience and confirmed in my mind that I wanted to continue my collage education and did not want to retire from the rail gang!

*Jay Raymond, Richmond, Va.*

## Rail pass adventures

Jack Turner's story ["The Spirit of '76: Circling America by Rail," page 16] evoked a memory of my first USA Rail-pass experience during 1977 spring break.

The route started in Rochester N.Y., and took me to visit a college chum in New England ended in Oakland, Calif. on the *Coast Starlight*.

"God looks after drunks and children," was Dad's advice when I left. Mom put vitamin supplements in my bag, but with most of my meals in dining cars, there was no need to worry about nutrition.

Highlights included a ride on a Clocker behind a silver, red, and blue GG1; the *Southern Crescent* from D.C. to New Orleans; and the *Southwest Limited*, still roughly on the *Super Chief/El Cap* schedule. I'd never been to Chicago or its rail terminals, but that wish was also fulfilled.

My California hosts, Warren and Adrienne Marcus, were the parents of another college chum. They happened to be friends of Richard Steinheimer. A phone call with Stein was yet another trip highlight!

*Matt Farrand, Lewisburg, Pa.*

This issue brought back fond memories from my own Amtrak trips in the mid-1980s from Rochester, N.Y., to and from the University of Texas at El Paso. My normal route was the *Lake Shore Limited* to Chicago, *Texas Eagle* to San Antonio, and *Sunset Limited* to El Paso.

One year I rode the *City of New Orleans* out of Chicago (after an afternoon White Sox game) to connect with the *Sunset* in New Orleans, and a car attendant took me to a fine lunch in the adjacent New Orleans U.S. Post Office cafeteria. On the same trip I met Yankees' great pitcher Ron Guidry's father, who was a conductor on the *Sunset* in Louisiana.

During these years, side trips to Milwaukee to visit a cousin and a *Lake Cities* Chicago-Detroit-Toledo connection to the eastbound *Lake Shore* also occurred. I was probably the only passenger into Toledo that night. Hard to believe that was three and a half decades ago.

*Cameron Lonsdale, State College, Pa.*



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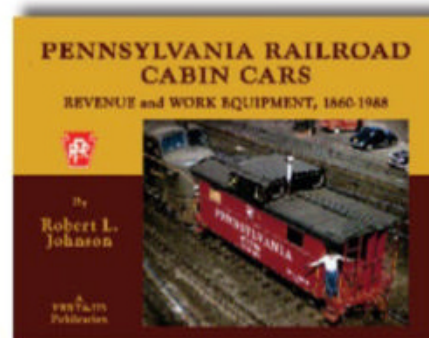
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## From the Pennsylvania Railroad Technical & Historical Society

### Pennsylvania Railroad Cabin Cars Revenue and Work Equipment, 1860-1988

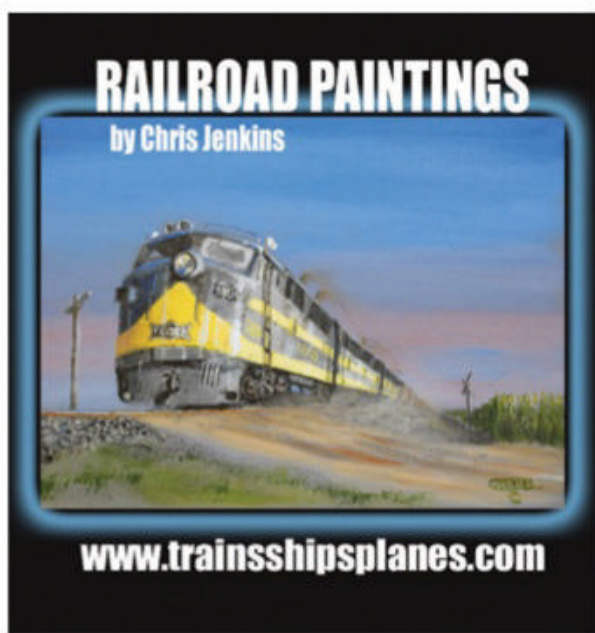


Robert L. Johnson provides an in-depth look at PRR cabin car development from the earliest beginnings in 1860. Their use in freight, passenger express, and work equipment service are all explained. The book concludes with their gradual disappearance during the Penn Central and Conrail years.

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## Fast Mail

The old Seaboard station in Miami was on NW 7th Avenue, not NW 17th Avenue as stated. I took many SAL/SCL trains in and out of that station during the 1960s.

*Paul Seidenman, San Francisco, Calif.*

## Montana with Ron Hill

The Ron C. Hill story ["Montana Calling," page 72] was engaging. I was immersed in tack-sharp imagery and shiny GN cab units in pristine scenery. Who wouldn't want to zip around Montana with a hot car and hot cameras? But what really brought this home was the fact that Ron did much of this with his mother. I lost my father as a teenager, and Mom has been the rock ever since. She has gone with me on rail trips off and on for over 20 years. We may be cruising New York's Southern Tier in a Caravan with a Canon, (not a Porsche and a Leica), but the essence is the same: train time can be family time. So with thanks and inspiration, I am calling Mom to ask, "Where are we going next?"

*Richard H. Jordan III, Rochester, N.Y.*

## Above and beyond

I found the centerpiece of the issue to be Richard Anderson's account of his trip from East Dubuque to D.C. and back ["Getting There Was Fun, Indeed!" page 38]. His use of a framing device, perusing a dusty old volume on a snowy Maine afternoon and unearthing a 50-year-old ticket folder, was inspired. I was struck by the attitude of the employees he encountered: the Burlington conductor who went "above and beyond" to book him on B&O after his PRR connection fell through; the car attendant who alerted his passengers to their imminent arrival in "dry" Indiana; the NYC ticket clerks who offered him a tour of the Buffalo Central Terminal waiting room. In late 1965 these railroaders had to know the American passenger train was on the fast track to extinction. Yet they soldiered on, ever attentive to the needs of the customer, offering a level of service their Golden Age predecessors would have admired. I'm grateful to Mr. Anderson for sharing his story with us.

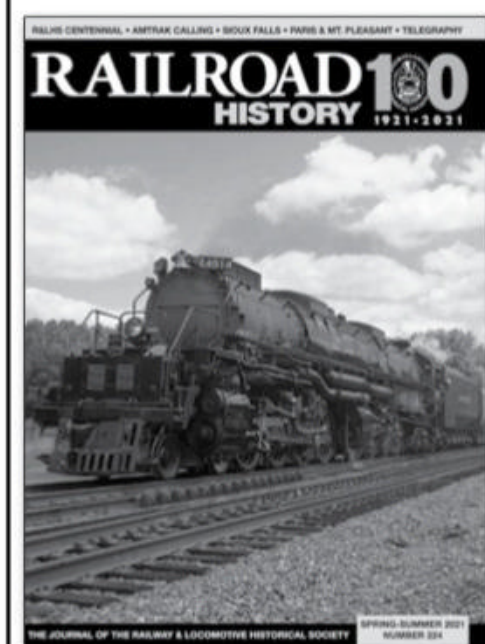
*Phillip Yahnke, Sun Prairie, Wis.*

## New Hampshire geography

The Summer 2021 issue is another great one. On page 65 the B&M RDCs will have a long journey if they are headed north for Concord, N.H., which is directly southeast from Lebanon, or at least it was when we lived in Hanover in the early '60s.

*Stu MacKay, Tucson, Ariz.*

# A Century of the R&LHS



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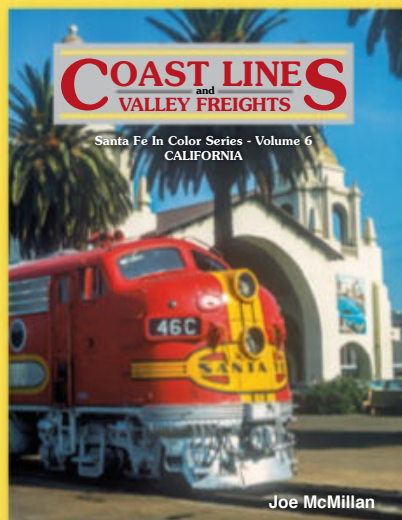
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Recently restored B&O EA 51 appears in Electro-Motive's then-new locomotive assembly plant near Chicago in 1937. Today, the unit resides at the B&O Museum in Baltimore. EMD

## B&O EA at birth

Thanks for printing a photo of cosmetically restored B&O EA No. 51 ["Head End," page 5]. It is a first-class restoration and I never get tired of looking at pictures of it. Readers may also catch another glimpse of this engine on the Electro-Motive assembly line on page 22 of the Spring 2020 issue [and above]. A magnifying glass reveals that the locomotive in the background nearing completion is indeed B&O EA No. 51!

*Bill Hornbrook, New Martinsville, W.Va.*

## Mexico mix-up

In the editing of my letter ["Fast Mail," page 11] the name of the railroad owning the 130-class Pacifics was changed. The 130s were engines of the Ferrocarril Mexicano, which ran from Mexico City to Veracruz. The Ferrocarril Central Mexicano was a railroad that ran from Mexico City to Ciudad Juarez on the U.S. border. The "FCM" lettering on Mexicano locomotives stood for Ferrocarril Mexicano.

*Victor Hand, Bar Harbor, Maine* 

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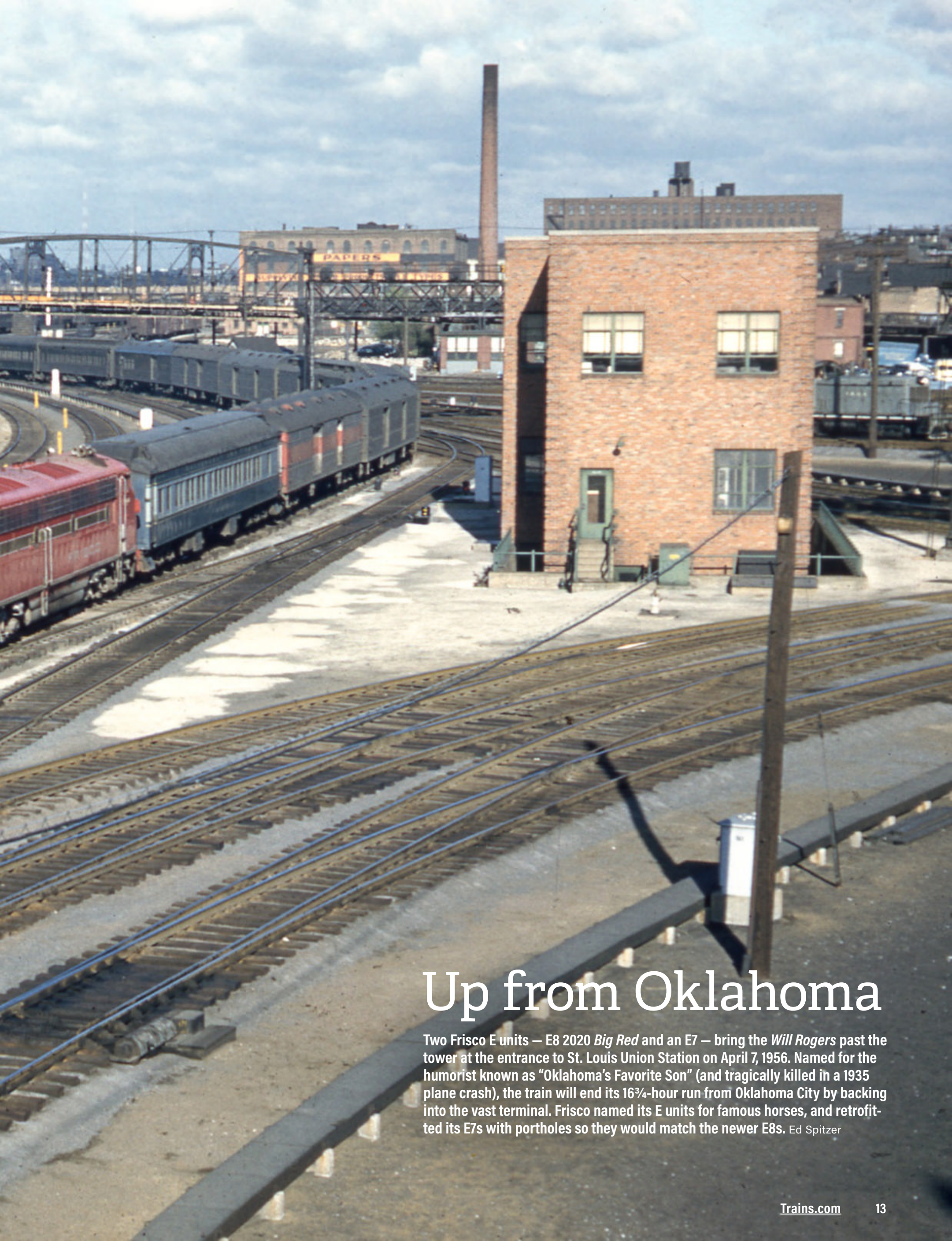
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# Up from Oklahoma

Two Frisco E units — E8 2020 *Big Red* and an E7 — bring the *Will Rogers* past the tower at the entrance to St. Louis Union Station on April 7, 1956. Named for the humorist known as “Oklahoma’s Favorite Son” (and tragically killed in a 1935 plane crash), the train will end its 16¾-hour run from Oklahoma City by backing into the vast terminal. Frisco named its E units for famous horses, and retrofitted its E7s with portholes so they would match the newer E8s. Ed Spitzer



# Why K4 1361 matters

Altoona's 4-6-2 isn't just another restoration project

**There are so many mainline steam restorations going on now,** the mind reels. Where to begin? Are you thrilled by the prospect of seeing Santa Fe 4-8-4 2926 rolling again? How about Nashville, Chattanooga & St. Louis 4-8-4 576? Or Chesapeake & Ohio 2-8-4 2716? We might even see two Reading 4-8-4s before long. And kudos to the Western Maryland Scenic for hitting the finish line a few months ago with C&O 2-6-6-2 1309.

What really got me excited recently is the news from the Railroaders Memorial Museum in Altoona, Pa.: Pennsylvania Railroad K4s 1361 is poised to escape purgatory. The museum's chairman, former Norfolk Southern and Amtrak CEO Wick Moorman, is heading up a \$2.6 million campaign to get the 1361 back in service. Now we're talking!

I didn't come along soon enough, and wasn't in the right place, to see a K4 in regular service. But I fell under its spell in 1965 when an aunt and uncle in Philadelphia bought me a set of art prints the PRR was selling, reproductions of paintings by the great Grif Teller.

Most of Teller's work for the calendar series was blatantly commercial — idealized scenes with multiple trains, unapologetically selling PRR mythology. But one stood out. It was, of course, Teller's masterpiece, *On Time*, showing K4 5411 hustling a passenger train

through a fearsome snowstorm. Here, Teller avoided the publicity clichés and portrayed a machine working its guts out under the toughest conditions. This was fine art, not commercial art.

It was also a testimonial for a great class of 425 locomotives, most of them

**The K4 became a lasting symbol of the PRR; the 1361 is one of only two survivors.**



**K4 1361 is flanked by two sisters at Bay Head, N.J., in 1955. After 28 years displayed at the Horseshoe Curve, it was restored in 1987, only to be sidelined a year later.** Philip R. Hastings

built in PRR's Altoona shops. The K4 became a lasting symbol of the railroad, from its earliest assignments on PRR's heavyweight limiteds of the late 1910s to its commuter runs on the New York & Long Branch four decades later. As one of only two survivors (No. 3750 resides at the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania in Strasburg), the 1361 was destined to symbolize the PRR legend.

The on-again, off-again life of 1361 since its original 1987 restoration has been a frequent subject of conversation in preservation circles, a checkered story characterized by fresh starts and inevitable disappointments. Looking back over those 34 years, it's hard to argue that what's going on now in Altoona is anything less than a miracle.

One of the people charged with making the miracle happen will be Davidson Ward, president of FMW Solutions LLC,

the engineering firm that will oversee the restoration. Ward is getting to be an old hand at this sort of thing, with several locomotive projects under his team's belt. But the 1361 will be special. Old school as it might be (PRR built the engine in 1918), the K4 has significance way beyond its simple, pre-Super Power wheel arrangement. Like the DC-3 in another arena, the K4 was an engineering marvel.

"The K4 was the first scientifically designed locomotive, wherein the railroad undertook a progressive series of tests at Altoona on predecessor models, tweaking various components to improve the design," explains Ward. "The concept of commonality in components between the K4s and L1s [2-8-2] locomotives is something more similar to modern railroading than the preceding era. Between the K4s and L1s classes, the PRR at one time had nearly 1,000 locomotives with essentially the same boiler and many shared parts."

Ward would get complete agreement from the late Bill Withuhn, longtime



Smithsonian curator and author of *American Steam Locomotives: Design and Development, 1880-1960*. In his book, Withuhn wrote that the K4 was an essential step in the march toward the ultimate machines of the 1930s and '40s.

"The legacy of the K4s was pervasive," Withuhn explained. "The standardized locomotives developed by U.S. engineers in 1918 for the United States Railroad Administration in several classes . . . were influenced by the K4's proportions. Every class of heavy passenger engine developed later in the U.S. was affected."

Ward and his team have already determined that the 1361 is eminently restorable, provided the funds get raised. As with all engines, it starts with the boiler.

"During our engineering study of 1361, we used the very latest in non-destructive testing technology to verify the makeup of steel alloys used to repair the boiler in past efforts," Ward explains. "This included employing laser-induced breakdown spectroscopy to verify the type and suitability of steel alloys used by previous contractors to repair the boiler. This analysis revealed a few dozen rivets that had already been installed but which have a carbon content too high for boiler



**A reproduction of 1361's classic front end greets visitors entering Altoona's Railroaders Memorial Museum.** Robert S. McGonigal

usage — these will be replaced."

Ward said the team is also using what's called "finite element analysis" to redesign perhaps the most distinctive thing on the engine, its Belpaire firebox. Ward says the updates will not impact the appearance of the engine — the squared-off Belpaire firebox is as emblematic of the Pennsy as its keystone — but will enable it to meet today's FRA safety standards.

I can't help but cheer on the museum and its fund-raising campaign, led by Moorman and oriented around museum memberships. I've already joined, an impulse made up of equal parts admiration and obligation. I feel the latter keenly, having ridden the 1361's cab on July 26, 1987, on a return trip from Bellefonte, Pa., to Altoona that could only be described as a dream. Bill Withuhn himself was at the throttle, alternately coaxing and spanking the big Pacific through its paces.

What I remember most about that ride was the sound of the 1361's boiler, a deep, palpable rumble coming from deep within its courses. Bill remarked on it too, averring that the old engine sounded more authoritative than even he expected. Let's hope the Railroaders Memorial Museum makes its goal. I'd love to hear that sound again. ■

KEVIN P. KEEFE joined the *TRAINS* staff in 1987, became editor in 1992, and retired in 2016 as Kalmbach Publishing Co.'s vice president, editorial. His blog "Mileposts" is at [Trains.com/ctr](http://Trains.com/ctr).



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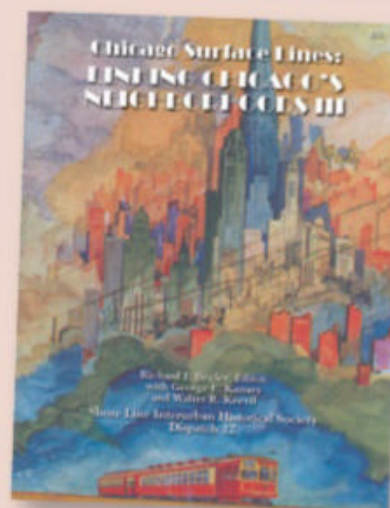
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# The little charmer, the Steam Queen, and the big top

As the North Western's "goodwill ambassador," Ten-Wheeler 1385 thrilled thousands in the 1980s

BY CHRIS BURGER • Photos by the author

**D**uring the late 1970s and early '80s, when I was manager of Chicago & North Western's Wisconsin Division, there wasn't much left in most railroads' tills for public relations and advertising. In our neck of the woods, when most folks thought about railroads, what came to mind was the Milwaukee Road bankruptcy. Our railroad had made a lot of progress since becoming employee-owned in 1972, and many North Western people, including me, felt we had a positive story to tell — but we also understood the financial realities. Having grown up during the tail end of the steam era, and having begun my rail career when roads like the Burlington, Reading, and Union Pacific had steam programs of one kind or another, I understood the fascination and could see the benefits.

Back in 1967, as a C&NW trainmaster at Madison, Wis., I became familiar with

the Mid-Continent Railroad Museum at nearby North Freedom and its former C&NW R-1 Ten-Wheeler, No. 1385. Mid-Continent at the time was considered to be one of the premier steam-railroad preservation sites in the country, and the idea of bringing the 1385 back to the main line as a public-relations tool to show what all we'd accomplished began rattling around in my brain. Also, I thought our employees' morale would benefit from the public's seeing what they did and had accomplished.

Fast forward to 1981, when a couple of seemingly unrelated events set things in motion. The first was one of my periodic meetings with FRA inspector Jack Schweger. As we were breaking up he told me he'd heard I'd like to "do something" with the 1385 and would do what he could if I ever came up with a plan.

Not long thereafter I was in Vice President, Operations, Jim Zito's office to pitch a safety program we wanted to initiate on the division. In the process I noticed a framed photo behind his desk of a group of railroaders posed in front of a C&NW steam locomotive and asked about the details. He told me his father had been a Chicago Division engineer and the photo was of his engineer class's promotion. Our conversation turned to steam, giving me the opportunity to propose my idea.

Zito was aware of the Union Pacific's





Ten-Wheeler 1385 proudly heads the *Prosperity Special* south near Cleveland, Wis., on May 16, 1982, the first day of its tour of C&NW's Wisconsin Division lines.





The day before departing with the *Prosperity Special*, the 1385 starred at an open house in Green Bay. Also on display were SD40-2 6856 and GP7R 4200, one of 110 ex-Rock Island Geeps that C&NW acquired the previous year.



During 1385's break-in run on the Oconto wayfreight, VP Ed Burkhardt's inspection train arrived from the north. The trains swapped power, and the 4-6-0 took the special into Green Bay.

involvement with volunteers restoring Challenger 3985. He told me to explore what could be done on our railroad, with the understanding that any restoration would have to be done by volunteers. He also said he thought one or more of the North Western's 4-8-4s had gone to Mex-

ico and might still be there. I didn't think that was the case, and despite visions of roaming around Mexico on expenses, I knew where to find what I thought would be the ideal locomotive in the 1385. She was big enough to impress, small enough to go anywhere, and simple enough to

minimize the chance of problems as well as maintenance. Plus, she was representative of the railroad's largest single class of steam locomotive.

### PITCH TO THE PRESIDENT

In October 1981 I made my recommendation to use the 1385, also mentioning my feeling, based upon preliminary discussions, that the museum would be agreeable. Zito agreed, and the two of us approached President Jim Wolfe with the idea. Wolfe saw the benefits, but didn't feel the railroad could support a full-blown program — though he did leave the door open for more limited activity. This made me think of a promotional train on the Wisconsin Division during the May 1982 National Transportation Week pulled by the 1385 and consisting of a new diesel locomotive and freight cars that we had recently bought or rebuilt, along with a business car or two to entertain customers and other guests. The message would be, "Sure there's a recession and things are tough, but we've invested in new locomotives and equipment and upgraded our track to be ready when things pick up. Here's a look at the past and the future; check us out, meet our employees, and prepare to be impressed."

As an additional benefit, the first



weekend of Transportation Week would coincide with the C&NW Historical Society's annual meeting in Green Bay, a logical place to begin the tour. I thought we'd call it the *Prosperity Special*, in a nod to a 1922 train of the same name consisting of 20 new Southern Pacific locomotives being shipped from Baldwin. Zito liked it, and Wolfe said OK. So did the FRA, whose subsequent inspection of the 1385 revealed few problems. When the leader of the FRA inspection team, upon first seeing the locomotive, said, "She's a little charmer, isn't she?" I was pretty sure we'd get their approval.

Mid-Continent leaders saw the benefits of partnering with us, so agreement wasn't hard to reach. Two museum volunteers were to accompany the 1385 and be responsible for firing and maintaining it, with lodging and meals to be paid by the railroad along with the costs to prepare the engine. Another provision was that there would be an annual trip on our line through North Freedom to benefit the museum.

Some of the FRA-mandated work to prepare for the *Prosperity Special* required a drop pit and couldn't be done at the museum, so in mid-April the 1385 ran from North Freedom to Green Bay, where a group of 15 or so employees led by motive power foreman Al Kawalek had volunteered to be involved.

The two-day trip was uneventful, and gave us a taste of things to come. Despite there being no advance publicity, there were people smiling and waving all along the route. The same was true of the break-in run on the Green Bay–Oconto Falls wayfreight a couple of weeks later, during which we got the idea for outreach to schools. While we prepared to depart Oconto on the return trip, four busloads of school kids arrived to check us out and get impromptu lessons in history and safety. We were waiting at Oconto for the arrival of VP-Transportation Ed Burkhardt's inspection train, which eventually arrived with the customary two F units, but, as a surprise for Burkhardt, departed behind the 1385, with him at the throttle.

The *Prosperity Special* — 1385, an auxiliary water car, a nearly new GP50, a boxcar for supplies and tools, a covered hopper, a coal hopper, a gondola, TOFC and auto-rack cars, plus a waycar and two business cars — left Green Bay for Milwaukee on May 16 on the first leg of its week-long tour. On the itinerary were two Milwaukee-area trips, one of which was for the media, and trips from Milwaukee to Janesville via Deval and the Northwest

commuter line, Janesville to Madison, and finally Madison to North Freedom.

Each day's trip was broken into segments of an hour or two, each with a new group of guests and a photo runby en route. Someone had suggested that I should be at the throttle for the first segment, and of course, I was only too happy to oblige. After leaving the Green Bay depot, the railroad ran south through an industrial area before turning east to cross the Fox River on a long bridge before beginning an uphill climb. As we neared the end of the bridge, I widened on the 1385, which had been equipped to control trail-

ing diesels, and dialed in a notch or two on the GP50, only to find our speed decreasing as we bit into the hill. The more I increased power the slower we went until finally, on the verge of stalling, I shut off and set the brake until we could figure out what was up. We had tested just about everything on the break-in trip but never thought of the remote-control box. It didn't take long to figure out the problem: the box was wired to go in reverse when the control was set to "forward!"

In previous years, and still ongoing in 1982, the North Western had a badly needed and very aggressive line-abandon-



**School kids from Oconto listen to Mid-Continent's Tom O'Brien talk about steam during the 1385's break-in run. Despite a lack of publicity for the run, the engine attracted a crowd.**



**The 1907 Alco undergoes FRA-mandated work at the Milwaukee Boiler Co. in spring 1983.**



With two executive F7s, a boxcar for tools and supplies, gondolas of coal, bi-level suburban cars for passengers, and business cars for crew and VIPs, 1385 crosses the Kate Shelley Bridge west of Boone, Iowa, in spring 1983.



Artist Gil Reid produced pen-and-ink drawings in support of C&NW's steam program.

ment program, with Wisconsin being among the states most affected. Not surprisingly, this strained relations with state and local officials. We invited some of them, along with customers and their families, to ride in the business cars, which I think made new acquaintances, fostered understanding, and made later dealings easier. The women in these groups couldn't get over the size of the business-car kitchens and all that the chefs were able to produce from those tiny facilities. One Milwaukee newspaper devoted an entire section to them, and there was a lot

of resulting press coverage of the special, the C&NW, and the railroad industry in general.

My secretary, Sue Gensler, had once worked for a public-relations firm and handled the p.r. aspect of the

operation, arranging for media coverage and a host of other details. I later learned that her work on the projects had earned her the nickname "The Steam Queen."

I still have a box full of complimentary letters from various folks who had ridden or seen the train. Sue made a brochure out of a bunch of them, which we sent to President Wolfe and others in Chicago. I think that helped in the subsequent decision to extend the program. Another factor was the invitation of C&NW vice presidents and other officers and their families to be our guests on the Milwaukee-Janesville segment. Many had been skeptical, but were impressed by the crowds along the way, with several expressing surprise that we were on time.

The North Western's Iowa Division

was headquartered in Boone, which celebrated its railroad heritage with an annual "Pufferbilly Days" event in September. When Division Manager George Maybee learned of the *Prosperity Special's* success, he asked if it was possible to get the 1385 out there and offer public rides from Boone over the nearby Kate Shelley Bridge. This required an extension of the FRA approval, which had been only for the previously planned *Prosperity Special*, as well as arrangements with Chicago commuter agency Metra for the use of some bi-level commuter cars to carry passengers, approval from Mid-Continent, and a host of other things. It all fell into place for the September 1982 operation, which became the model for our subsequent "Goodwill Ambassador" program.

## BUILDING ON SUCCESS

With the success of the *Prosperity Special* and Pufferbilly Days, the main question about an ongoing program was the cost and location of boiler work on the locomotive to satisfy the FRA, which had provided a short list of items for the *Prosperity Special* as well as a longer and more expensive one should we decide to extend the program. The answer turned out to be the Milwaukee Boiler Co., whose owner had contacted me with an offer to





perform the work at a very reasonable price. So upon its return from Iowa, the 1385 went back to Green Bay to be stripped of external piping and jacketing and then moved to Milwaukee.

Upon completion of the boiler work the engine was moved back to Green Bay to be reassembled. In late May 1983 it ran to our big Milwaukee-area yard at Butler to begin its Goodwill Ambassador career on "Butler 400" trips in connection with Butler Railroad Days, an event similar to Pufferbilly Days organized by

Chamber of Commerce President Jerry Hilton, who was also active in the local NRHS chapter.

Meanwhile, our program had taken shape so that we would make the engine and train available to on-line groups such as Chambers of Commerce, Rotary Clubs, and the like, with a charge based upon our out-of-pocket costs and for them to raise funds by selling train-ride tickets. We'd gather the requests and put an itinerary together that made operational sense and accommodated as many as of them possible. En route to and from these locations we'd make stops for schools, with other displays at layover and other locations to get as much benefit as we could from being there. Employees at a number of locations arranged "open house" displays and activities as well. The North Western donated a surplus business car and a lightweight baggage car to the museum, the business car to be a dormitory for accompanying volunteers and the baggage car to house a workshop/storage area, a gift shop, and an exhibit area. These tours and trips continued through 1985; a planned 1986 schedule had to be curtailed to eliminate passenger trips due to the cost of insurance.

### 1385 JOINS THE CIRCUS

A train to move equipment from the Circus World Museum (CWM) at Baraboo via C&NW lines to Milwaukee for a parade had been an annual event in the 1960s. After a hiatus, it was resumed in 1985 — with the 1385. The train consisted of antique circus wagons on restored circus flatcars as well as three or four CWM-

owned passenger cars for the museum's guests and a North Western business car for ours. It was unloaded near Milwaukee's lakefront, where there was an old-fashioned "big top" circus and displays, which included the 1385. Portable steps enabled the public to inspect the 4-6-0's cab, and the lines for this were often as long as for the circus itself.

The Ten-Wheeler also headed the train in 1986 and again in '87.

The train would return to Baraboo behind diesels, while the 1385 was usually routed elsewhere via Chicago, where it would be on display in North Western Station for several days, visible to thousands of commuters each morning and afternoon. It would then be serviced and washed prior to resuming its schedule at our M-19A enginehouse, whose two remaining coal docks made for interesting photos. The 1987 display included a "photo op" for the media and a speech from the business car in the depot as part of Chicago's sesquicentennial celebration.

In the 1980s there were still employees who had worked on steam in the '50s. One of them was Wisconsin Division traveling engineer Gary Selk, whose father had been

**We found the problem: The diesel-control box was wired to go in reverse when the control knob was set to "forward!"**



The Ten-Wheeler's power as a joy-spreading storyteller was reflected in the faces of the thousands of people, young and old, who came out to see it in places like Ridgefield, Ill. (top right); Lodi, Wis. (above right); and Manly, Iowa (above left).





The 1385 pulls out of C&NW's big Milwaukee-area yard with a "Butler 400" trip in mid-1985; the F7 on the rear will pull the train back.



The 1986 edition of the Great Circus Train is assembled at Baraboo, Wis. Routed via northern Illinois, the two-day trip will deliver antique wagons for a parade in Milwaukee.

a roundhouse foreman and passed along some of his steam knowledge. Gary became the de facto project manager and coordinator of the work on and operation of the 1385, as well as doing most of the running on our division. He was one of the keys to our success. Others without

whom I wouldn't have dared to attempt the project were Mid-Continent's Skip Lichter, Carl Ulrich, Tom O'Brien, and Rick Peters, who had kept the engine percolating at the museum. Artist Gil Reid was part of the team too, contributing pen-and-ink pieces for us to use.

## CROWD-PLEASER

Given my division manager "day job," I didn't travel as much with the 1385 as I might have liked, but one of the most enjoyable and rewarding parts of doing so was talking with people along the way. They ran the gamut from kids who had never seen a steam locomotive to retired railroaders and their families. One of the common things that we heard from the latter was that a family member had worked on the 1385. We knew, given where it had been assigned, that this was unlikely, but finally it dawned on us that if you were a C&NW operating employee in the steam era, chances are you'd worked with an R-1 at some point.

The 1385 did a lot of good in its ambassador role with trips in Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, and Michigan during 1983, '84, and '85, and opened the door for trips with other excursion engines on both the North Western and other Midwestern roads. But as its novelty wore off, so did its effectiveness as a p.r. tool. And it became a heavier burden for operating personnel as divisions were consolidated and local management was reduced, especially given our new "executive" passenger fleet and F7s and the in-

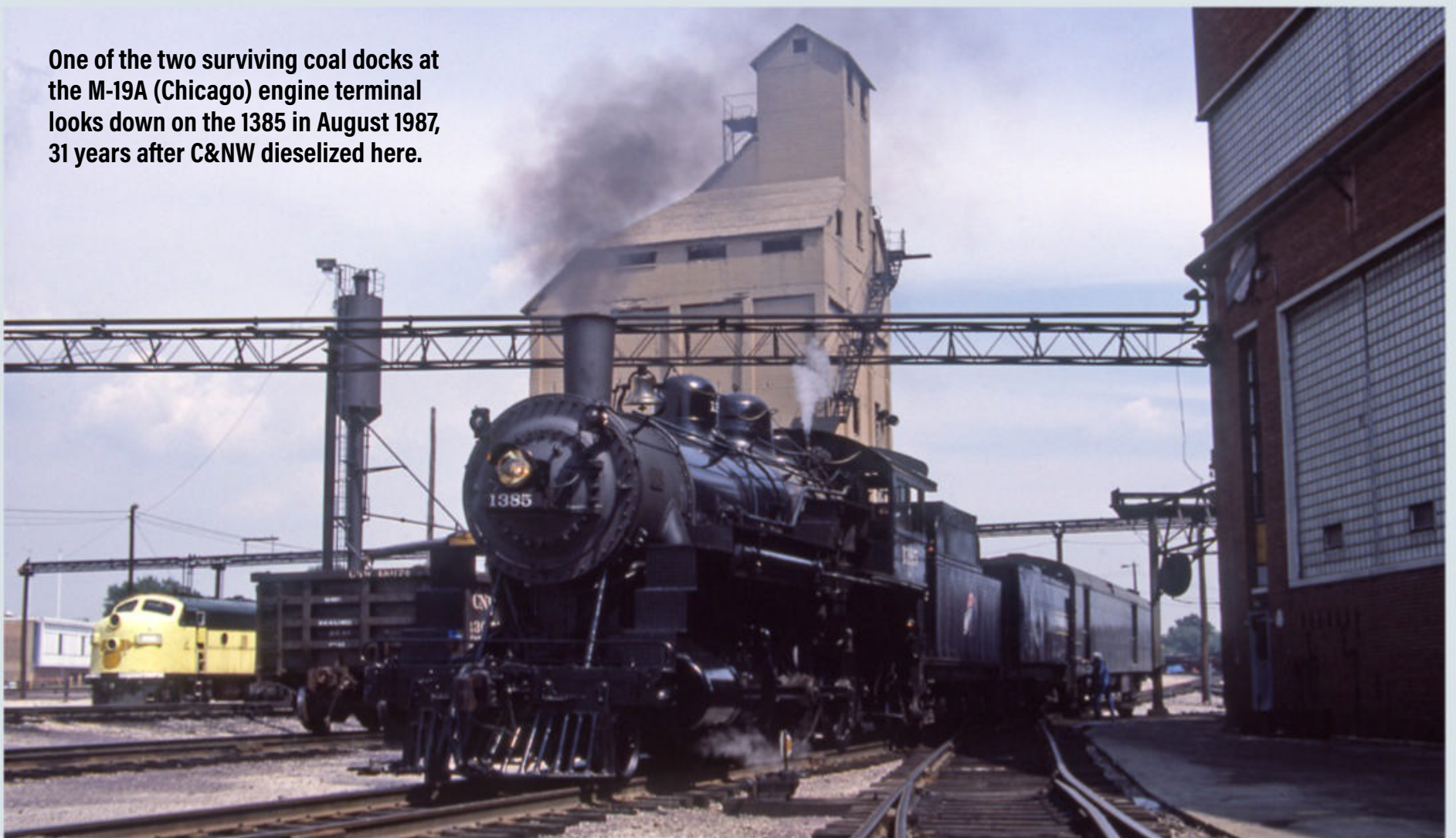




C&NW employees Jim Steever (left) and Gary Selk strike the classic conductor-engineer watch-comparison pose at Butler Yard in 1983.



As an "L" train rumbles overhead, the 1385 backs out of Chicago's North Western Station for the benefit of TV news cameras in 1987.



One of the two surviving coal docks at the M-19A (Chicago) engine terminal looks down on the 1385 in August 1987, 31 years after C&NW dieselized here.

creasing number of moves they generated.

A 1988 survey by Jim Zito revealed support, but also a feeling that it was time to dial things back somewhat. By this time, insurance issues had already made that happen, but the final word came from President Robert Schmiede, who said that use of the 1385 "reinforces the already generally held image of railroads as low-tech antiques" and recommended that we discontinue its use. After that, the 1385's only moves on the North Western were ferry trips to and from activities on

other railroads in Wisconsin.

In 1985 the Wisconsin Division was consolidated into the newly created Northern Division in St. Paul, where I became division manager. The next year I became vice president of investor relations in Chicago, followed by a succession of other jobs. I felt good about the steam program, as well as the unique and rewarding experiences and opportunities it provided. I'm not sure any other railroad would have made them possible for a division superintendent. **1**



*CHRIS BURGER, retired since 1998 from a career with NYC, New Haven, C&NW, Central Vermont, and Central of Indiana, lives with his wife Rita in Indiana. This is the 16th entry in his "Best of Everything" series.*





After a crew change, SD40T-2 8386 leads the MFLAT out of Texarkana, Texas, on August 31, 1985. At the right is the interlocking tower that protects the Cotton Belt's crossing with the KCS main line to Shreveport. Scott D. Lindsey





# Hellooo, Texas!

Or, how I became  
a “Fiddler”

A ROCK ISLAND ENGINEER FINDS REFUGE  
ON THE COTTON BELT // BY STEVE LASHER





**GP30 5004 takes a spin on the turntable at Tyler on a hot day in August 1973.**

H. E. Chelf, David P. Oroszi collection

**D**ecember 1979 started out looking pretty grim for a lot of Rock Islanders. The end of the Rock was apparent and there were no guarantees any of it would be picked up. So, when word spread that Southern Pacific was hiring, it was a note of Christmas cheer. A phone call to SP's human-resources department confirmed it, and I was assigned a date (late December) and a place (a motel room in Cedar Rapids, Iowa) where I was to be given an interview.

sprinkled with mechanical questions such as, "How do you change ends on an engine consist?" You knew your woods had been shelled by the time he got done.

It must have gone OK, for a week or so later we received phone calls from the SP telling us to a) report to a certain doctor in the Quad Cities for a company physical, and b) pending the outcome of the physical, to report to Tyler, Texas, on a certain date, where we would become Cotton Belt employees. *Whooppee!* My friend Bill Bosley and I both were familiar

could hardly contain himself, and, after a bit, the waitress no longer saw the humor. After we got back on the road, Bill was still hoorahing about her accent. However, when I pointed out that after his then-3-year-old daughter spent a couple of years around a bunch of native Texans, she would sound just like that, his tone took a 180-degree turn. "If she ever sounds like that, I'm going to beat her butt" was his very serious response.

Our arrival at Tyler was the first indication our bubble would burst sooner rather than later. The Cotton Belt boys were not about to turn their pride and joy, the *Blue Streak Merchandise*, or any other of their hotshots, over to us ex-Rock Islanders. We didn't know it at the time, but the locals differentiated between Tyler and Commerce crews. Tyler-based crews were "Rosin Bellies," referring, I think, to the piney woods of East Texas. Those based at Commerce were "Fiddlers," for their supposed propensity to switch (fiddle with) cars and sometimes entire trains. We were destined to become "Fiddlers."

## **When word spread that Southern Pacific was hiring, it was a note of Christmas cheer.**

An SP HR person was there, along with a general road foreman of engines. They rented two rooms and had most of us filling out employment applications and paperwork in one room while the general road foreman interviewed us one at a time in another. It was a pretty intense grilling. Most of it dealt with "situations," *i.e.* "What-would-you-do-if . . . ?" questions,

with the Cotton Belt's reputation for running fast trains.

Our first stop in Texas was Hooks. Hooks is the first exit on I-30 past Texarkana and it was where we decided to get something to eat. When the waitress came over and said "Howdy, what kin ah git for y'all?", it was too much for Bill and he broke into laughter. Every time she spoke, he



## COMMERCE, WHERE?

Any description of Commerce, Texas, would be incomplete without mentioning Billy Warren. She was a slight-of-frame, chain-smoking (R. J. McDonald, who started out clerking at Commerce before transferring to engine service, said it wasn't unheard of for her to have three cigarettes going at one time — one in the ashtray, one in her hand, and one in her mouth when things were going hot and heavy) *habanera* of a woman who ruled the roost at Commerce.

Billy knew all the big names of officialdom on the Cotton Belt/SP in Texas and was on a first-name basis with almost all of them. I always suspected that if any skeletons existed east of El Paso, she knew where they were. If you were smart, you made every effort to stay on Billy's good side. Fortunately, in spite of my being a "Yankee," she liked me and helped me more than once.

Commerce was a boomer haven in its own right. Working on the Texas enginemen's seniority roster were a couple of refugees from Florida East Coast, a Canadian from Canadian National, a former San Diego & Arizona Eastern man, a trio of Rock Islanders from Shawnee, Okla., an ex-SP engineer from California, and, of course, Bill and me. I probably left someone out, but you get the general idea.

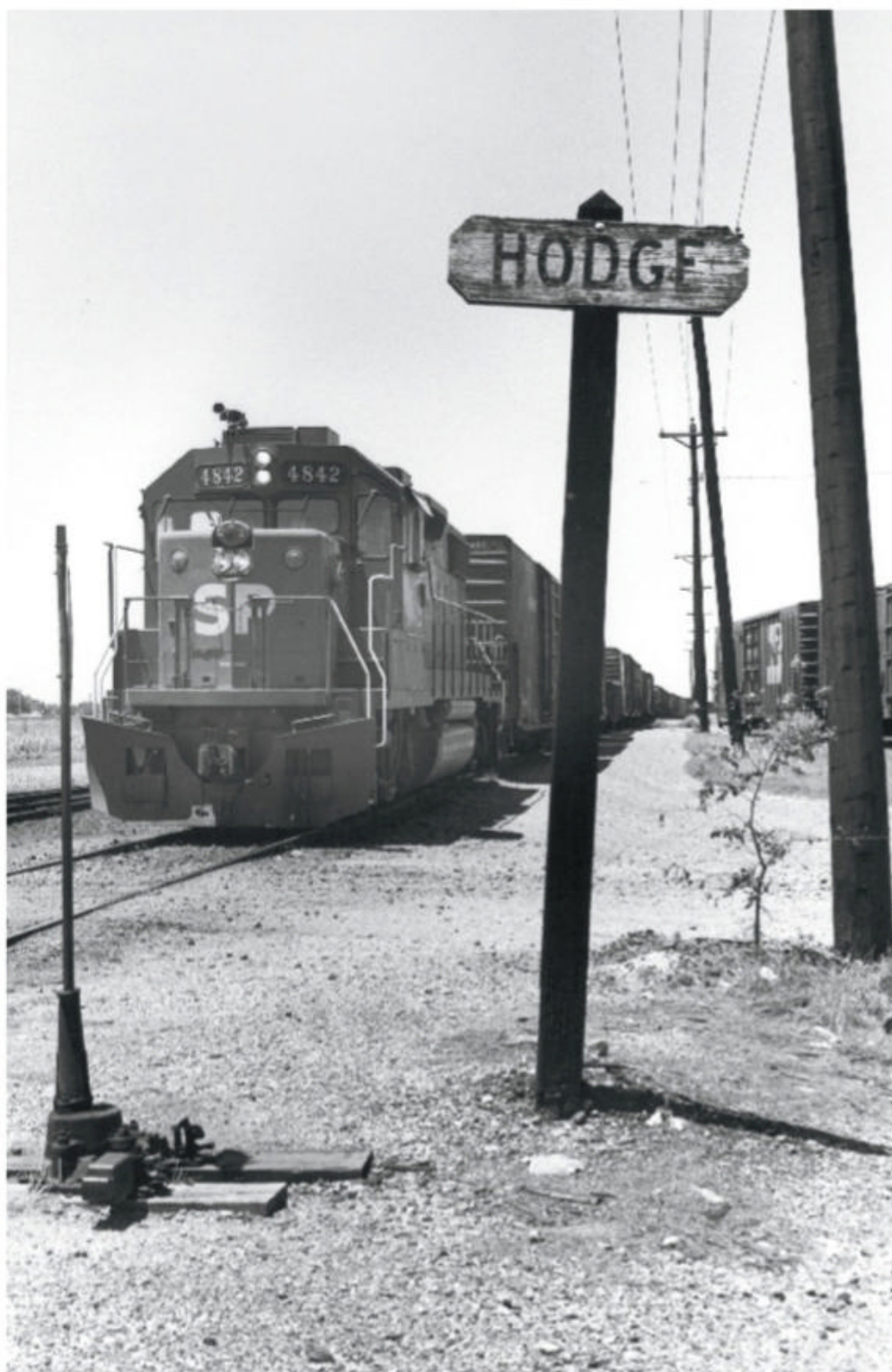
The Commerce extra board was almost like being a permanently assigned boomer. From east to west, it covered yard engine jobs in Texarkana, a road switcher at Mount Pleasant, the "Simtrot Dodger" (a road switcher at Commerce in addition to the road jobs based there), yard jobs at Miller Yard in Dallas, four road switchers at Carrollton, and yard jobs at Hodge Yard in Fort Worth. Because there had once been a branch to Sherman and a small yard there, the Cotton Belt enginemen covered one of two Sherman jobs six months of the year — at night, of course.

## FLYPAPER

In his book *Blue Streak Merchandise* (Kalmbach, 1991), author



Straightaways like this one south of Mexia made for fast running in Texas. This image is from 1990, but the view from the cab is largely unchanged from decades earlier. J. Parker Lamb



In October 1982, two Cotton Belt trains work at Hodge Yard in Fort Worth. SP 4842 is a 1980-built GP38-2. J. David Ingles

**Hellooo,  
Texas!**



## Booming on the Cotton Belt



Fred Frailey accurately described the gridlock the Cotton Belt had become in 1979 and '80. It certainly came as a shock to us ex-Rock Islanders. It was ironic and curious that the Rock and the Cotton Belt faced the opposite problems: the Rock Island had starved to death for want of business while the SSW was choking on a glut of it. In an effort to prevent any delay whatsoever to the BSM and its running mates, the ABSM and APW, everything else came to an absolute standstill for a good part of every day. My first pay trip as a Cotton Belt engineer can serve as an example.

Bill Morgan, the road foreman at Commerce, had tried to get us qualifying trips over the entire territory and had largely succeeded. However, due to congestion on the main line from Mount Pleasant

us was that on many days back on the Rock's East Iowa Division, four eastbound and four westbound trains would be the whole train count for an entire day!

After watching four Cotton Belt trains sail past on the impeccably maintained main track, the Pine Bluff dispatcher came on the radio again.

"CB Pine Bluff dispatcher to engineer Lasher on CB 318 at Omaha, over."

"This is engineer Lasher, go ahead, over." (Cotton Belt radio culture was a lot more formal than it was on the Rock.)

"Engineer Lasher, can you have that train in Texarkana in an hour?"

Oops! This was a bit of a pickle. Since I had never been over the territory before, I had no experience to guide me. All I had was

check you out" green, and the dispatcher came back on the radio.

"CB engineer Lasher, the signal is for you."

Now, I can tell you, 90 percent of running a train is knowing the terrain and where you're at and how you can expect the train to behave, so operating without that backup knowledge is uncomfortable in the extreme. But we made it to Texarkana exactly one hour later, and in one piece. I sure was grateful to step off that engine, though!

I can't help but note at this point another, perhaps delicate, comparison. My conductor on this trip was Willie Magee, a black man. Now, I remember when the Rock Island hired the first black brakeman on the East Iowa in the mid-1970s. This was the heart of the Union and definitely north of the Mason-Dixon Line. But he was not warmly received and became sort of the Jackie Robinson of East Iowa trainmen. All sorts of ugliness came his way.

In contrast, black enginemen and trainmen had been a part of the Texas picture for years. On first thought, one might assume that it would be exactly the opposite. One usually argumentative Commerce trainman, Danny Kessler, always insisted I was a "damn Yankee." When I pointed out that I was from Kentucky, his reply was "Yeah, but it ain't south of the Red [River]!"

You couldn't get anymore "South" than Texas, yet, in race relations on the railroad, the Texans were far ahead of their northern counterparts.

## "Engineer Lasher, can you have that train in Texarkana in an hour?"

east to Texarkana, I had never seen that part of the railroad as I could never get on a train that got past Mount Pleasant. Naturally, my first pay trip was on that territory. I was the engineer on a crew called to relieve the hog-lawed crew on 318 (DAPBY, Dallas-Pine Bluff), stuck in the siding at Omaha, the first town and siding east of Mount Pleasant. The dispatcher in Pine Bluff called our conductor and told him we would be there for "the BSM and three more southbound trains."

"Raj-ah," replied Willie Magee, our conductor. The irony here for

the timetable that specified our maximum allowable speed and the distance to Texarkana, with no help as far as the lay of the land was concerned. A little quick mental math suggested it should be possible, so, with some tentative bravado (I figured when in Texas, do as the Texans do), I replied, "CB dispatcher Pine Bluff, sir, this is the first time I've ever seen this railroad, but if you'll turn that signal in front of us green, I'll die trying."

In a few moments, the pot signal changed from its intimidating bright red "halt" to an "OK, let's





**A westbound Cotton Belt freight departs after working Lufkin on October 19, 1997.**

David P. Oroszi



**Led by a GP9 with an oilcan headlight then favored by the SP, the *Memphis Blue Streak* rolls through Mount Pleasant in June 1963.**

Steve Patterson

## **“DÉJÀ VU ALL OVER AGAIN”**

Less than six months after I hired out on the Cotton Belt, the recession of 1980 hit and whisked the covering of respect away, revealing that the SP/Cotton Belt had no clothes. In decimating almost all of SP's major revenue generators — lumber, auto parts, and, the *coup de gras*, the already fading perishable business — the recession brought the SP/Cotton Belt to its knees, dealing it a blow from which it would never completely recover. It had no locked-in coal traffic base to help it through hard times. Gone were the multiple sections of all the trains, and the SSW's train count dropped

precipitously. Congestion disappeared overnight! As a consequence, several of the displaced Tyler enginemen exercised their seniority on Commerce jobs and helped lead to my first step down on the Cotton Belt.

The first move for me before being furloughed was being sent to Texarkana as a hostler for a several months during the hot, hot summer of 1980. It was like being forced from being an Indy car driver to a pump jockey. I was literally cleaning windshields.

Being at Texarkana wasn't all bad. I discovered one of the greatest undiscovered comedic talents of all time in a guy named

Klinkscale. Although I can't remember his first name (I'm not sure I ever knew it), “Klink” had a down-home way that could have easily helped him hold forth at the Grand Ol' Opry. The usual target of his “roast” was a switchman named Emmett.

Big Emmett, a former football lineman, had supposedly played for East Texas State at Commerce and had a tryout with the Green Bay Packers where, according to Klink, they had to paint a large L on top of one shoe and an R on the other so, when in his scrimmage set, Emmett would know which way to break.

Generally, Klink wouldn't get

**Hellooo,  
Texas!**



fired up good until the switch crew came into the shanty for beans and a game of dominoes. Before long everyone in the shanty was in tears laughing as Emmett threatened to chase Klink down and break his scrawny neck! Given Emmett's size, that was distinctly possible. I was constantly grabbing a handful of paper towels to wipe away the tears as I struggled to catch my breath from laughing so hard.

Even the hostling jobs eventually came to an end, and a period of furlough ensued. The years 1981 and '82 were not the greatest to be working for the Cotton Belt/SP. Business recovered somewhat, and SD40T-2s and GP38-2s that had been stored began to be seen on the road once more. In my opinion, these locomotives were EMD's high-water mark. Unfortunately, I didn't see much of them as my seniority only allowed hanging on by the hair of my chinny chin chin.

#### LIFE IN LUFKIN

It was a desperation move on my part. Lufkin, Texas, similar to

Sherman, once had been served by a branch from Tyler. Cotton Belt had a small yard there. Eventually, Cotton Belt severed the branch and SP consolidated the yards. By agreement, the SSW engineers maintained rights to 25 percent of the yard assignments, meaning that for six months of the year, SSW engineers manned the afternoon yard job while the SP engineers kept the daylight job 12 months of the year and the afternoon job 6 months.

This was mainly an aggravation for the Tyler engineers. No one wanted to bid on the job as Lufkin was too far to be a reasonable drive from Tyler. The extra board men hated it as they would have to deadhead down and spend seven days on a low-paying switch engine before being relieved. So, the Lufkin job was unloved and unwanted by everyone but me. To me, it was a lifesaver. By agreement, there was an option when bidding on the job of working 21 days straight with 5 days off, which is what I did, as it was about a two-

hour-plus drive from my home in Greenville, Texas.

The SP yard office in Lufkin proved reasonably easy to find. Parked in front was one of SP's legion of GP9s, most of which by this time had been through the rebuild program. I can't say that these Geeps were my favorite engines to switch with. Most of them had their "switch/run" toggle switch on the throttle drums disconnected and ranged anywhere from reasonably to aggravatingly slow to respond to the throttle. They were so-so stoppers — any engine used in switching service that couldn't stop what it could get moving was an item to be wary of. Their ratchet-type handbrakes at the end of the long hood could wear you out, and since the SP was strict about "securing" an engine you couldn't avoid them. But in the entire time I spent at Lufkin, GP9s were the only engines we had.

On day one, however, we suddenly had our yard switching cut short by instructions to go out and dog-catch a hog-lawed "Rabbit" train north of town. The agreements allowed the yard job to go up to 15 miles or so outside normal yard limits to relieve hours-of-service-expired crews, a not-uncommon task for the Lufkin switchers, as it turned out. We drove out in the company carryall, and I couldn't help but notice how dark it was driving through the piney woods to get there. The pine tops effectively cut off what little starlight or moonlight might have gotten through. It was black in there.

When we got to the crossing where the train was waiting, what was evident was a four- or five-acre area devoid of trees. Heavy ruts and bulldozer tracks, along with a few odd freight-car parts, told one that a derailment had occurred here. On closer inspection you could see that trees on the perimeter were scorched and blown down. I was told that one of the chemical trains out of Houston (SRASK, Strang Yard to the Alton & Southern at East St. Louis) had derailed there. It seems that after the train had gone into emergency, the engineer and head brakeman

**GP35 7605 streaks through a spring rainstorm with the Blue Streak Merchandise near Hearn in 1967.** J. Parker Lamb







looked back and saw flames and decided to vacate the area. As they ran along the track, an explosion occurred that knocked both of them down and scorched the hair on the backs of their heads. One had to give the chemical trains the respect they demanded. They sure were effective at clearing out pine trees.

It was in Lufkin that I experienced two of Texas's less than charming notables. One was fire ants and the other was a classic "Blue Norther." I made the mistake of poking a fire ant mound in the city park where I usually walked daily. I can't speak to cats, but curiosity surely didn't pay off when it came to fire ants. I somehow got one on the knuckle of my left thumb and the sting was memorable, like a cross between a wasp sting and a mosquito bite raised to the fourth power. Needless to say, I decided to never do that again!

"Blue Norther" is Texas-ese for a fast-moving winter cold front. My first experience was late one evening on the Lufkin job. We knew it was coming and were trying to get done before it hit, but it caught us while we were in the middle of our last task of the evening, switching the Lufkin Foundry at the south edge of town. Earlier, the afternoon had been pleasant, around 60 degrees, and

all I had on was a light jacket. The switchmen were similarly clad, so when the wind started kicking up — blowing dust and trash down the parallel street, the thermometer dropping alarmingly — we were all caught, perhaps with our pants not down but definitely too thin. In the blink of an eye, the temperature went from the high 50s to the mid-30s with a substantial wind chill. We all about froze before we finished and tied up.

The Lufkin job wasn't a particularly bad one; it was just a bit of a

#### HOME AGAIN ... SORT OF

I can't say the indigenous Rock Island people received us warmly. They had endured the arduous and endless work trains and all the attendant inconveniences that went with rebuilding the railroad from the ground up. With some justification, they viewed us as interlopers, although we didn't hurt them, as we did have to dovetail in behind them on the seniority roster. It wasn't quite as bad for Bill and me as it was for the few men that had come from Pine Bluff; at least

**One had to give the chemical trains the respect they demanded. They sure were effective at clearing out pine trees.**

drag being away from home for three weeks at a time. However, it ended when the six months of the Cotton Belt engineers' time ended. I wound up floating from job to job as a fireman and being furloughed. A ray of sun came with the move of business from the Corsicana-SP route to the ex-Rock Island Kansas City-Tucumcari line. Being furloughed for a couple of months ahead of the move helped get us in the right frame of mind. Our available choices were Dalhart, Texas, or Pratt, Kans. Bill and I opted for Pratt. We headed there in early 1983.

we knew some people in common from our Rock Island days and had considerable road experience.

The Pine Bluff men, in contrast, had been furloughed soon after their promotions and had little road experience and, even then, little exposure to using the automatic air brake, as use of it was strongly discouraged on the original Cotton Belt. Most of the Cotton Belt had been brought up using the dynamic brake and were lost without it. The problem was, sometimes it didn't work. But, apparently, the thought of turning these hot trains over to the com-

**Southern Pacific B30-7 7875 rolls through Commerce with author Lasher at the controls of train PBDAF for Dallas.** Terry A. Kirkland, Ed Cooper collection

**Hellooo, Texas!**





**Five sets of double-stack cars for Long Beach trail GP60 9632 and two sisters as train MBSMF climbs a sag near Luling, Texas, on July 15, 1990. J. Parker Lamb**

paratively inexperienced Pine Bluff boys gave the company pause. They assigned an SP road foreman who had to ride with all us foreigners before we were allowed to mark up on the extra board.

This, for the most part, was my kind of railroading. Get on at Pratt, go like hell, and get off at either Herrington or Liberal. The portions of either line with welded rail were good for 70 mph, while the jointed rail was good for

though, it was haul-ass railroad-ing. It was the only place I ever “tripled” the road, going from Pratt to Herrington, back to Pratt, and, after a box lunch, back to Herrington, making it comfortably under the hours-of-service in about 9 or 10 hours.

Coming east one night, we hit the 70-mph welded rail around Bucklin and, since coming eastward across Kansas is mostly downhill, we were up to the

for that part of the country. As we bored east with our Pyle Gyalight swinging and us blowing for the country crossings, we began to catch and pass a semi truck. We got even with him and he noticed us, apparently offended, and with a “honk, honk” on his horn and a puff of black smoke from his dual exhausts, he stepped on it and pulled away. Five or six miles down the road a Kansas state trooper had him pulled over and was in the process of giving him a ticket. Of course, we saluted him with our Nathan 3-chime as we passed . . . at a steady 72 mph!

## **We saluted him with our Nathan 3-chime as we passed . . . at a steady 72 mph!**

60. The jointed rail was noticeably rougher. Although it had been retied and resurfaced, jointed rail develops a “memory” and the bent rail joints didn’t automatically forgive the lack of maintenance they had with the Rock. In general,

70-mph speed limit in no time. Kansas Route 54 parallels the railroad almost all the way from Pratt to Liberal, and in some places is within easy sight south of the railroad. Kansas 54 is only two lanes, but it is a main route

### **HOME AGAIN**

For all practical purposes, Pratt is in the middle of nowhere. It was 75 miles of the longest miles in the world to Wichita, which was the closest town of any





**Above:** SP's top train, BSMFF, charges west through Bucklin, Kans., on October 3, 1996. Lead unit GP60 9684 passes a distinctive Rock Island block signal, characterized by the "sun bonnet" visor.



**Upper left:** GP60 9684 and brethren are assigned to east-bound train LBFHX at Pratt, Kans., on October 4, 1996. Two photos, David P. Oroszi

size. Additionally, housing in Pratt was scarce and expensive, so I didn't see myself moving there. A call to Miss Billy sealed the deal.

"You ready to come home Steve Lasher?" she asked, in her Texas lilt.

"Yea, I am, Miss Billy. Can I hold anything at Commerce?"

"There is a pool turn with Ronnie Blair vacant. He went to Hodge on 17 last night," she replied.

"Mark me up on it and I'll catch him next time out."

"OK, Steve Lasher" (I don't know why, but she usually used my full name).

"Thank you, Miss Billy."

Thus ended my booming days, as I worked jobs out of Commerce until leaving the railroad in 1987. Some experiences were good, some bad, and some just work, but I was and am proud to be a Cotton Belt "Fiddler." 📌



**Lower left:** Viewed from the fireman's seat, train CHLAT rounds a bend west of Herrington, Kans., on October 27, 1982.

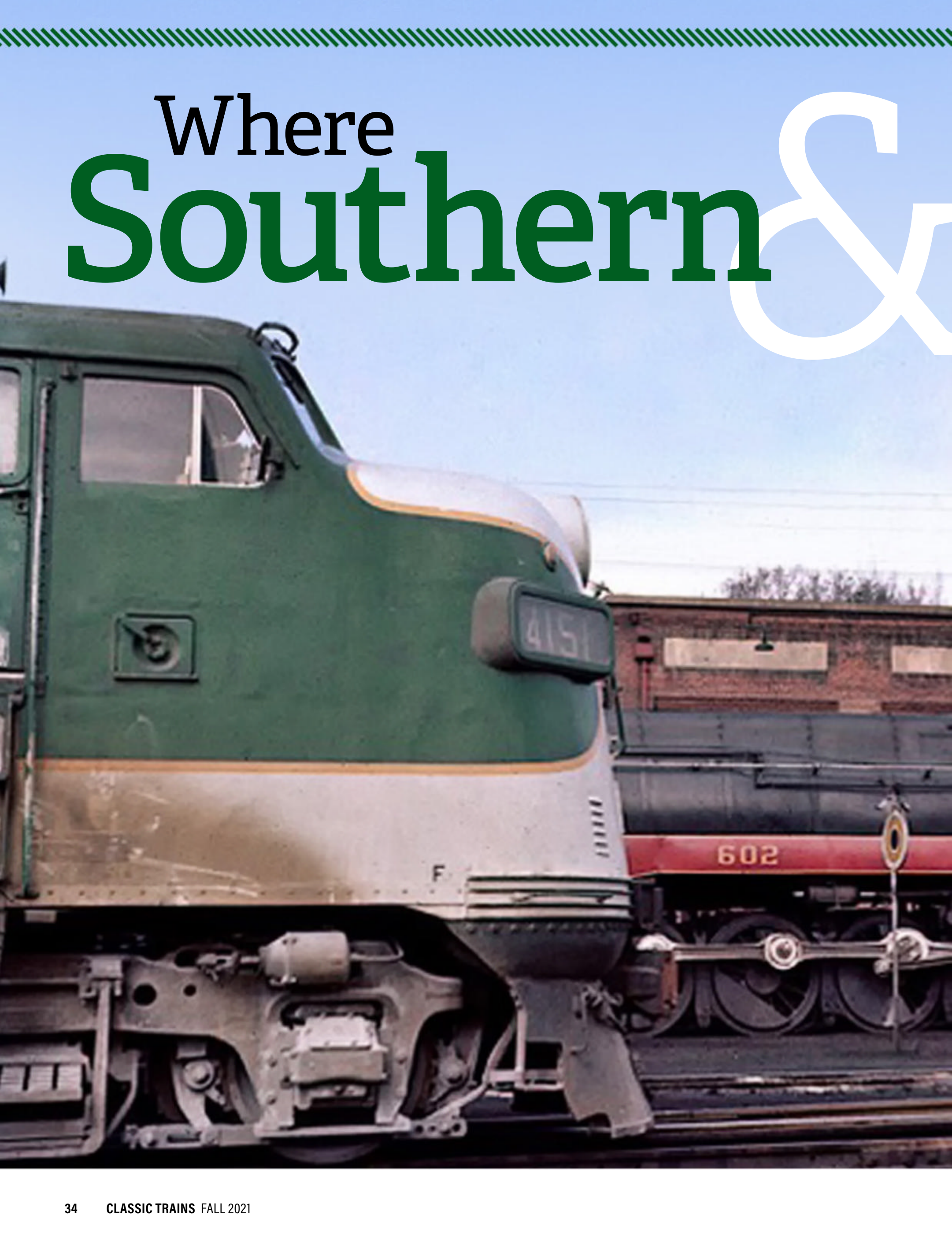
J. David Ingles

*STEVE LASHER, who wrote about his late-1970s Rock Island and Burlington Northern in Winter 2013 and Spring 2017 CLASSIC TRAINS, grew up in Cleveland, Ohio, then moved to Kentucky where he graduated from Murray State University in 1973. He took a*

*Cotton Belt buyout in 1987 and moved to Louisville, where he retired as a Registered Nurse. He and wife Bonnie live close by in Indiana. His friend Bill Bosley recently retired from Union Pacific number one in seniority at Pratt, Kans., on the former Rock Island.*

**Hellooo,  
Texas!**





# Where Southern &



# N&W met

Straddling the Virginia-Tennessee state line, Bristol was a showcase of steam and classic diesels in the late 1950s

BY STEVE PATTERSON • Photos by the author

**A BOUNDARY LINE WAS FORMED IN THE LATE 1700s** when Virginia became the 10th state of the new Union on June 25, 1788, and Tennessee acquired statehood as the 16th one on June 1, 1796.

A half-century later, when a town — Bristol — had been founded straddling that border, two railroads from opposite directions began building toward it. Having constructed 204 miles from Lynchburg, Va., the Virginia & Tennessee's first train arrived in Bristol on October 1, 1856. Although the East Tennessee & Virginia had started construction earlier, 130 miles away in Knoxville, Tenn., it reached Bristol second, on October 8, 1858.



Also on March 2, 1957, N&W Y6 2145 has just arrived at the roundhouse to be serviced and turned. The 2-8-8-2 will likely depart on scheduled time freight No. 88 at 3:05 p.m.



Having brought train 46, the *Tennessean*, into Bristol from Memphis at 10:10 a.m., two of the six Alco PAs Southern purchased for that service rest until leaving on No. 45 at 5:30 p.m. on February 17, 1957.

Southern and N&W shared the N&W roundhouse, located on the Virginia side of Bristol. SOU F3 4151 and N&W J 602 wait to take trains west and east, respectively, on March 2, 1957.



And then the Civil War broke out. Bristol was smack in the bullseye of it, being on one of the Confederacy's principal supply routes. With Union sympathizers on both sides of that border, the two railroads' trestles and their separate Bristol depots were repeatedly burned.

Sixteen years after the war, the Virginia & Tennessee was folded into the Norfolk & Western in 1881, while the ET&V became part of the Southern Railway in 1896. Although the railroads remained separate, a joint Bristol

depot, still standing today, was finished in 1902.

Bristol was also to have another railroad, the Virginia & Southwestern, extending 69 miles farther into the tail of Virginia to Appalachia, via Speers Ferry, Natural Tunnel, and Big Stone Gap. For a while, with a connection to the Louisville & Nashville at Appalachia, Bristol enjoyed Pullman service to Louisville, Ky. On the east side of Bristol, the V&SW headed for the tip of Tennessee, ending at Mountain City. The V&SW was absorbed into the Southern in 1916.



**Right:** With a cut of loaded coal hoppers on the head end, N&W time freight 88 climbs out of Bristol behind Y6a 2-8-8-2 2161 on a rainy March 27, 1957. The coal on 88 came from southwest Virginia and would go only 28 miles to be set out at Glade Spring, where it would move down the Saltville Branch for Olin-Matheson Corp.

**Left:** M-class 4-8-0 382 prepares to leave Bristol station with N&W's Abingdon Branch mixed train, known as the "Virginia Creeper," on June 30, 1956.

**Below:** On November 23, 1957, J-class 605 brings train 41, the *Pelican*, into Bristol, where the Washington-New Orleans train will be handed back to Southern for advancement west. Note the SOU RPO car first behind the 605.











## Bristol: Two states, two railroads



Today, the old V&SW between Moccasin Gap and Mountain City is long gone. The 1982 merger of Norfolk & Western and Southern put the remaining line through Bristol under the single ownership of Norfolk Southern, although trains — all of them carrying freight now — still change crews as they pass through.

In East Tennessee are the Tri-Cities — Bristol, Kingsport, and Johnson City, about 25 miles

apart from each other. I grew up in the 1950s in Kingsport on the beloved Clinchfield Railroad, but I was attracted to the activity at Bristol because of the passenger trains and the N&W's steam engines. The big varnish shows were the *Pelican* and *Tennessean*, which came in from the east behind N&W J-class 4-8-4s and continued west with Southern diesels (plus, in the middle of the night, the *Birmingham Special*).

Above: N&W 9 and 10 were mail trains stopping on flag at all stations between Roanoke and Bristol. They were scheduled to meet at Abingdon, with 10 departing Bristol at 1 p.m. and 9 arriving at 1:45. Here's No. 10 at Wallace, about 4 miles out of Bristol, on November 23, 1957.

Right: N&W's Bristol yard switcher, M-class 4-8-0 379, has strayed across State Street and into Tennessee on March 2, 1957.







Left: J-class 4-8-4 604, having come in with the *Pelican*, is coaled and inspected on March 2, 1957. After turning and further servicing, the 4-8-4 will depart with mail train 10.

Above: Its tender filled, the 604 moves off the turntable and into a roundhouse stall to be lubricated and inspected from the pit underneath.



Right: Southern GP7 2195 shows off its original green body color as it works in the joint SOU-N&W yard at Bristol on August 8, 1956.

Below: Two Southern PAs moving from the engine terminal 1½ miles to the east pass through the Bristol depot on August 8, 1956. They'll wait at the station's west end to replace an N&W J on train 45, the *Tennessean*. The N&W RPO car will go out on mail train 10.





And there was N&W's Abingdon Branch mixed, which originated at Bristol, plus Roanoke-Bristol mail trains 9 and 10.

As a kid with no car or driver's license, it was only when my mother or a friend would take me to Bristol that I could submerge myself in its railroad nectar. Riding a bus to Bristol wasn't practical since I would still have been too far from the N&W roundhouse when I stepped off. Beginning in fall 1958 when I enrolled at East Tennessee State College at Johnson City, I could still admire the passenger

trains, but steam was ending at Bristol. I satisfied my yearning for steam by eating my sack lunch aboard one of the East Tennessee & Western North Carolina 2-8-0s as the crew made up their train. The ET&WNC ran steam until 1967, but I'll always treasure my 1950s experiences at Bristol. **1**

*STEVE PATTERSON retired from a 42-year career with Santa Fe and BNSF in 2007. He has been contributing to TRAINS since 1960 and CLASSIC TRAINS since 2000.*

**Left: J No. 602 hustles the *Tennessean* out of Bristol on March 2, 1957. With four regular stops and the possibility of six flag stops, train 46 will average 42 mph over the hilly 209 miles to Monroe.**

**Below: For lighter freight work on various lines, N&W had 16 K1-class 4-8-2s such as No. 104, simmering near the Bristol roundhouse on February 17, 1957.**

**Bottom: Southern F units and PAs and an N&W Y6 wait at the roundhouse water tank for their next assignment on March 2, 1957.**





Archive Treasures

# HIGHEST RAILS IN NEW

THE MASSIVE HELL GATE BRIDGE WAS A  
TOWERING STAGE FOR PENN CENTRAL  
AND AMTRAK ACTION IN THE 1970s





BY VICTOR HAND • Photos by the author, Center for Railroad Photography & Art collection

# YORK

Having just crossed the 1,017-foot Hell Gate Bridge, Penn Central GG1 4913 begins the long descent to ground level with a Boston-bound Amtrak train in February 1973. Diesels will take over at New Haven.





In November 1972, PC 4917 and its eastbound train rumble 150 feet above the narrow strait the early Dutch settlers named Hell Gate. Before January 1, 1969, when PC took over the New Haven, NH EP5 electrics and FL9 dual-mode units prevailed here.

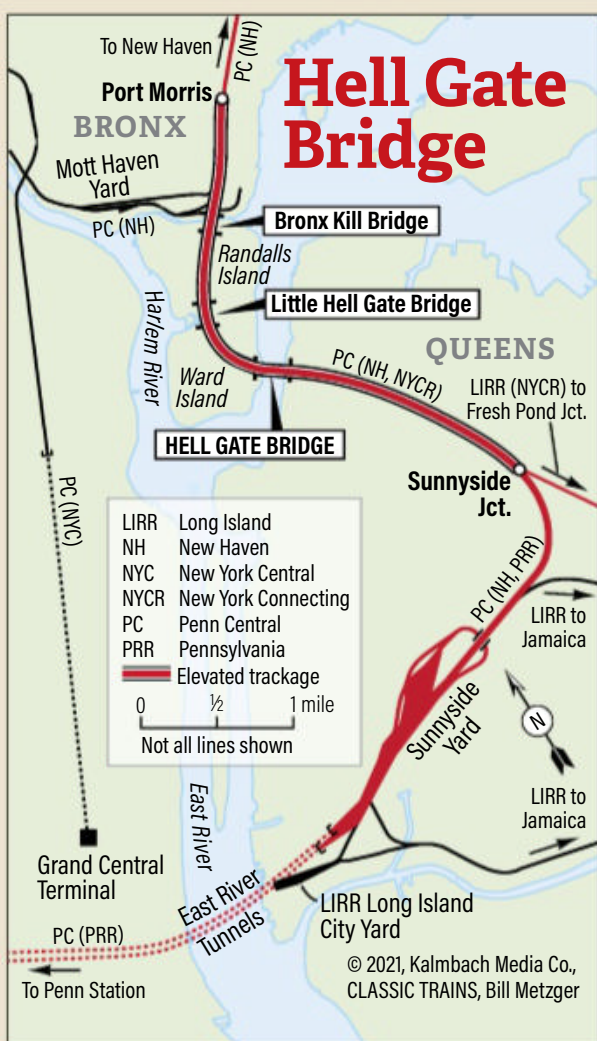
In another November 1972 photo, made from a daring perch atop the main cantilever truss, photographer Hand framed a New York-bound train in the arch of the bridge's Wards Island tower.







Pairs of pylons mark the ends of the four-span bridge over Little Hell Gate, a narrow water passage that has since been filled in. GG1 4905 enters the bridge with a train to Boston in November 1972. The two tracks in the foreground are for freight.



**N**ew York City, where I grew up, is a city of bridges. Most of the big spans carry motor vehicles or subway trains, but there are five large railroad bridges in the city. The biggest is Gustav Lindenthal's massive Hell Gate Bridge.

Built by the New York Connecting Railroad between 1912 and '17 to link the Pennsylvania and New Haven railroads, the Hell Gate Bridge is actually three bridges connected by two viaducts, with long approach viaducts on each end. The entire structure is more than 3 miles long. The main span over the East River is a spandrel arch 1,017 feet long. It rises 305 feet above the river, and has clearance of 135 feet for water traffic below. It is one of the heaviest loading bridges in the world, designed to handle freight trains. It is similar in design to Australia's

famous Sydney Harbour Bridge, begun in 1923.

Completion of the Hell Gate Bridge and the New York Connecting Railroad gave the PRR access to New England. Passenger trains from Boston could enter Pennsylvania Station in Manhattan, and freight traffic moved to Bay Ridge in Brooklyn, from where carfloats took it across the harbor to PRR's Greenville Yard in Jersey City.

I first became aware of the Hell Gate Bridge as a teenager riding the *Washingtonian* between Montreal and New York. This overnight (and its northbound counterpart, the *Montrealer*) was operated by Canadian National,





## HELL GATE FROM THE AIR

*April 19, 1971*

**Left:** Looking like a toy on the massive bridge, PC GG1 4873 begins the 1.2-percent descent from the main span with a Washington-Boston train. Amtrak is 12 days ahead.

**Right:** A northward view shows the Hell Gate Bridge (foreground), the four-span deck-truss Little Hell Gate Bridge over filled land, and the two-span through-truss Bronx Kill Bridge.

**Below:** Having crossed the main bridge, an unidentified GG1 with PC markings and PRR stripes leads a train toward Penn Station.

A walkway was on top of the massive main girder, but as it flattened out near the top we were crawling on our hands and knees.







Central Vermont, Boston & Maine, New Haven, and PRR. It passed over Hell Gate in the morning on its way into Penn Station. The view of the Manhattan skyline from the bridge was spectacular. What a way to enter the greatest city in the world!

My first close-up view of the bridge was in spring 1969. I was working as a management trainee for Penn Central and was assigned to work with the maintenance-of-way department at the former New Haven Oak Point Yard in the Bronx. The NH had just been ab-

sorbed by PC a few months earlier. One morning the Bridge & Building Supervisor got a call from LaGuardia Airport that one of the warning lights atop the main arch of the bridge was out. "Hey, kid," he said. "Want to go out on the bridge to change a light bulb?" Of course my answer was yes.

We got into an ancient New Haven truck (if I recall correctly, it had a chain drive) and drove to the base of the north tower of the main span on Wards Island. The ex-New Haven man took out a large key and opened a steel door that

led to the interior of the tower, which was infested with pigeons. The steel stairways were covered in pigeon droppings. After a long climb we emerged on the main deck, went through another door, and climbed more stairs to the base of the main arch. A walkway was on top of the massive main girder, but as it flattened out near the top we were crawling on our hands and knees. The wind was blowing pretty hard.

At the top of the arch, my companion took out a screwdriver and removed the cover of the light fixture. "Hey, kid,





Amtrak's GGIs had been retired for more than 2 years, and Hell Gate's freight tracks had been devoid of catenary for more than 20, when AEM7 920 led Amfleet cars east on August 24, 1983.

In another photo from August 24, 1983, AEM7 913 skims across the main span with a train for Boston. Today, Amtrak ACS64 locomotives and Acela trains are the rule here, plus infrequent CSX and Providence & Worcester freights.





Left: Hell Gate was a major freight route until the PC-NH merger diverted traffic, and industries relocated or switched to trucks. The outside freight track, since removed, was already out of use when Conrail GEs led westbound tonnage across in August 1983.

Right: Amtrak GG1 931 (formerly PRR/PC 4931, subsequently AMTK 924) is bound for New Haven late in the afternoon of February 18, 1973.



give me that light bulb.” He flicked the old bulb into the river 300 feet below.

Once I was familiar with the bridge, I decided it might be nice to photograph trains on it. Over the next 15 years I ventured out to the main span on several occasions. It was a long walk up the approaches from either end. On my first visit I walked up from the

Bronx (north) end, but the neighborhood up there was pretty rough, and I was nervous about leaving my car parked there. On subsequent trips I parked at the Queens end, which was in a much better neighborhood. On one trip I discovered an apartment building in Astoria with a good view of the south end of the bridge. A \$20 bill to

the superintendent of the building gained me access to the roof.

On another occasion, I hired a helicopter to photograph an ocean liner leaving New York. There was a one-hour minimum charge, and the ship picture only took 30 minutes. The pilot asked what I wanted to do with the other 30 minutes, and I told him to hang out over Hell Gate. I got two trains.

By the time I was taking pictures, former Pennsy GG1 locomotives were operating through to New Haven. The heavy freight traffic that the NH had handled to Bay Ridge had been diverted to the ex-NYC Selkirk Yard near Albany, and the only freight moving over the bridge was interchanged to the Long Island Rail Road at Fresh Pond Junction. The daily freight was diesel-powered. In 1975, Amtrak’s new E60 electrics began to show up, followed in 1980 by AEM7s, which displaced the GG1s the following year. Today, the century-old landmark remains a vital, visible link in the Northeast Corridor. ■

*VICTOR HAND has traveled the world in search of steam trains, photographing railroads in 53 countries on 6 continents. The Center for Railroad Photography & Art recently acquired his image collection. CLASSIC TRAINS’ “Archive Treasures” series features images from the Center’s growing collection.*

**CRP&A** | CENTER FOR RAILROAD PHOTOGRAPHY & ART





# The versatile Milwaukee Road Little Joe



Train 262 crosses high  
above the Clark Fork River at  
St. Regis, Mont., in August  
1973 with a Little Joe leading  
three SD40-2s.






## THE 89-FOOT, 266-TON ELECTRICS WERE MORE THAN JUST BRAWNY FREIGHT HAULERS

BY STEVE SCHMOLLINGER • Photos by the author

**T**he word “versatile” seems an unusual description for an 89-foot electric locomotive, but for the Milwaukee Road’s 12 “Little Joe” electrics, it turned out to be fitting. During their years of service, they did everything from shepherding first-class passenger trains to switching cramped yards to hauling time freights over steep mountain passes. Most non-Milwaukee employees may remember them as strange but brawny machines that helped the railroad conquer St. Paul and Pipestone passes in Idaho and Montana with long freights behind them, but those more familiar with these “motors” saw them in a slightly different light.





Hard by the St. Joe River,  
Little Joe E79 switches at  
Avery on a July morning in  
1973. Visible in the distance  
is the Avery locomotive  
facility, which serviced both  
diesels and electrics.





Two Little Joe electrics were modified for passenger service. One was E21, seen at Deer Lodge, Mont., with train 15, the westbound *Olympian Hiawatha*, in 1951. Fred Matthews Jr.



Little Joe E79 switches a single covered hopper in the small yard at Avery in July 1973, demonstrating its versatility.



The brakeman for Little Joe E79 waits to couple onto train 262 for the run east from Avery. The railroad found that a diesel and electric combination was needed to meet expedited schedules over the Bitterroot Mountains.

Take Avery, Idaho, for example. The small town with its yard and engine facility was situated on the north bank of the St. Joe River. The yard had a limited number of tracks, with capacity for “blocking” cars for trains constrained by the river, which gave the right-of-way little room between its banks and the steep edge of the mountains. On a bright morning in July 1973, Dave Stanley and I found Little Joe E79 switching a cut of cars there.

According to Rob Leachman, a Union Pacific employee at the time who worked several joint Milwaukee-UP stations in Washington, “It was normal to call the crew for 262 early to switch 266’s train into station order. The crew would, of course, use the Joe for 262 to do the switching. That way, 266 . . . would have a much better chance of making it to Alberton, Mont., on hours of service.” Train 262 was a time freight, with a schedule to keep, while 266 was a “dead freight” (a Milwaukee Road term) carrying less time-sensitive traffic. An ex-Milwaukee Road employee is a bit more to the point when he says, “We used road power in Avery. There weren’t any switch engines there.” They simply made do with what they had.


Around 1957, Laurence Wylie, a Milwaukee Road electrical engineer, came up with his legendary “Wylie controller,” which

enabled electrics with multiple-unit equipment and diesels to be equivalently throttled simultaneously. The Joes had 16 throttle notches compared to the diesels’ 8, and a locomotive engineer could choose whether to engage the controller or not, depending on whether his Joe was mated with diesels.

Not long after E79 had finished blocking cars for 266, it coupled onto the point of a second 262 train flush with potatoes from Moses Lake, Wash. Leachman states that when the Milwaukee inaugurated the 261/262 trains in 1963, “management tried running them all-diesel at first, but found they just couldn’t keep up with the expedited schedule, whereas they found they could make much better time with a Joe plus diesels. At the same time, it made sense to increase the horsepower per ton on the districts with heavy grades, *i.e.*, the electrified Rocky Mountain Division.” The Joes developed 5,110 continuous horsepower and 75,700 pounds of tractive effort, and had there been long stretches of flat electrified territory, a single Joe certainly could’ve handled long trains on its own.

A year earlier at East Portal, Mont., I observed a 265 dead freight waiting on the main line with two Little Joes for power. According to Leachman, “In 1972, it was typical for 265 to pass





E70 waits with train 265, the afternoon westbound "dead freight," at East Portal, Mont., in August 1972. Note the trademark Milwaukee Road switch stand indicator on the siding.

East Portal in the afternoon or evening hours, and it often got 'stabbed' for both 262 and 264 in the Bitterroots."

One striking characteristic of these powerful machines was how quiet they were when idle, compared to the boisterous humming and hissing of a diesel. The only telltale that indicated they were actively waiting to press forward was the headlight of the lead Little Joe, which was at full brightness. It was some time before the train it was waiting on exited St. Paul Tunnel, and with the sun casting long shadows by mid-afternoon in these high mountains, a trainman closed the siding switch, and the train stopped only long enough to pick him up.

In my estimation, though, where the Little Joes really showed off their utility — and versatility — was working in tandem with diesels. I know of no other North American railroad other than the Milwaukee where electrics and diesels consistently worked together in the same consist with a single engineer.

During our 1973 trip, we witnessed the value of Laurence Wylie's invention, observing time freights conquer the Bitterroots and maintain their schedule by using a Little Joe on the point. One such train was a 262 we observed between Saltese and St. Regis, Mont., with No. E70 in the lead. The long motor

seemed to glide effortlessly through tight curves. Jim Russell, a Milwaukee Road operating employee who worked out of Three Forks, Mont., states, "We had a lot of 10-degree curves," and this certainly comports with the twisting path of the track we saw on this part of the railroad.

In this territory along the St. Regis River, the railroad had stretches of 100-, 112-, and 132-pound rail. Jim recalls, "I had roadmasters tell me the Joes had generous flexibility in the suspension to the point they were easier on the track than the stiffer-sprung SD diesel locomotives."

The Little Joes weighed in at a hefty 266 tons, including 20 tons of ballast the Milwaukee added to inhibit wheel slip. One might expect such a heavy locomotive to see only mainline use. But not so, as it turned out. Milwaukee's operating and mechanical departments made the best of what they had to work with, and showed just how versatile a well-designed, 89-foot electric locomotive could be. ■

*STEVE SCHMOLLINGER was a prolific Western railroad photographer and author. He submitted this, his only CLASSIC TRAINS article, before his death in December 2020.*





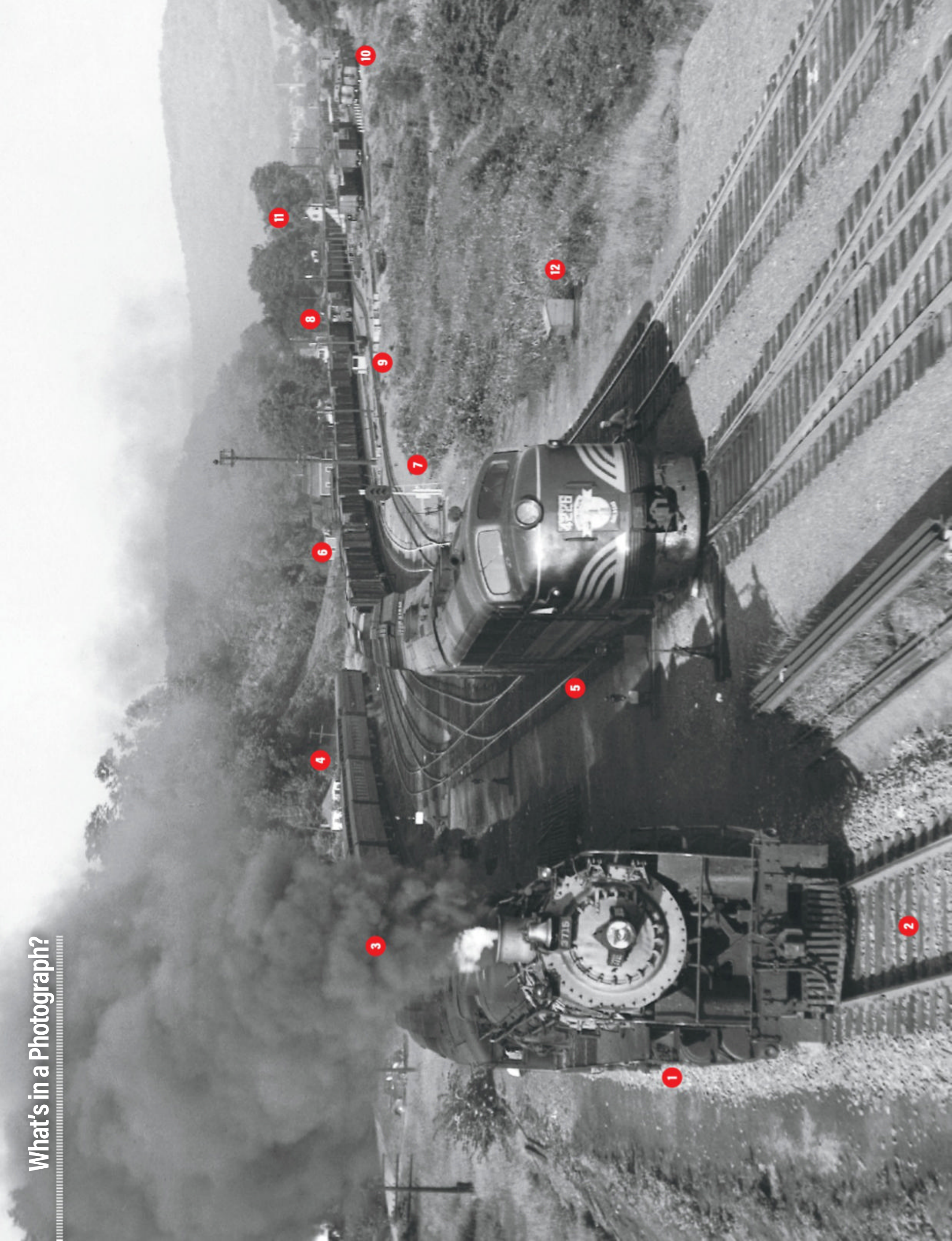
Second 262 rolls east of Avery with Little Joe E70 leading three diesels in summer 1973. The railroad's home-built "Wylie controller" enabled the control of both electric and diesels by a single engineer.

Joe E70 leads an eastbound freight near St. Regis, Mont., in August 1973. The Milwaukee's eastern electrified territory extended from Avery, Idaho, to Harlowton, Mont.





## What's in a Photograph?





# Boston & Maine at White River Jct., Vt.

A steam-powered, heavyweight passenger train passes freight JS4 departing the yard with an A-B set of F units

BY JERRY A. PINKEPANK • Photo by Philip R. Hastings

**White River Junction, Vt.**, was an important point for routes linking Montreal and Boston, and also Montreal and New York City. There, Canadian Pacific turned over to Boston & Maine its traffic for New York City. Canadian National subsidiary Central Vermont did the same, and also began a series of alternating trackage rights, CV-B&M-CV, south to the Massachusetts border. Beyond there, CV's main continued to New London, Conn. The map at right shows CV coming in from the northwest along the White River, past its yard and roundhouse. From the north is B&M's line from Wells River [see "What's in a Photograph?" Winter 2019] over which CP operated by trackage rights. Crossing the Connecticut River from West Lebanon, N.H., is the B&M's line from Boston, used by CP's Montreal-Boston passenger train, the *Allouette*. The B&M roundhouse [see "New England Adventure 1966," Summer 2021] was on the New Hampshire side. The White River Junction passenger station is in the wye west of the bridge.

## 1 B&M class P-4b 4-6-2 3715

Built by Lima in 1937; cylinders, 23 x 28 inches; drivers, 80 inches; boiler pressure, 260 psi. The P-4b's, Nos. 3715-3719, were preceded by P-4a's 3710-3714 (Lima, 1934). The 10 P-4's were all named, 3715 being *Kwasind*, for the strong man in Longfellow's poem *Song of Hiawatha*.

**2 Central Vermont single-track main**  
This line was used by Boston & Maine 14 miles south to Windsor, Vt., where CV assumed alternating rights over B&M. The Connecticut River line was equipped with automatic block signals from Wells River through White River Junction to Springfield, Mass., where B&M passenger trains were turned over to the New Haven to continue to New York City.

**3 Fireman making black smoke**  
Likely via pre-arrangement with the photographer, whose vantage point suggests he was on a signal mast, as there was no overpass here.

**4 B&M passenger train**  
The photographer identified the train as Bretton Woods-New York (Grand Central) seasonal train 70, the *North Wind*, leaving White River Junction at 3:20 p.m. and picking up a dining car at White River Junction, but that train ran last on September 14, and from the makeup of this train, with no diner evident and just one sleeper on the rear, it is train 74, the *Connecticut Yankee*, originating at White River Junction with coaches and a Sunday-only sleeper used as a parlor car on the rear, scheduled to leave at 1:53 p.m., picking up a New Haven dining car at Springfield. The coaches included one off the Central Vermont's Montreal-Boston *Ambassador*, probably the one ahead of

the Pullman. Apparently, the coaches for 74 turned back from train 73, due to arrive White River Junction at 2:50 p.m., and it is easy to picture a delay to 73 that would result in 74 departing late and adding to the potential for confusion with train 70 by the photographer.

**5 B&M F2A 4226, likely with F2B 4226B**  
B&M's F2s were not semi-permanently coupled like its FTs, but the railroad generally kept the like-numbered A and B units together. F2s had FT machinery in the carbody layout of the successor F3 model as EMD rushed to fill orders in the immediate postwar material shortage.

**6 B&M freight symbol JS4**  
The train originated at White River Junction with CP, CV, and B&M traffic to deliver to the New Haven at Springfield.

**7 Entering signal**  
For B&M's automatic block signal system governing the White River Junction-Boston line. B&M's signal diagrams show that the ABS extended across the bridge and along the south leg of the wye to the yard. Though the roundhouse was in West Lebanon, the yard for both Wellsboro-Springfield and Boston-White River Junction was on the Vermont side.

**8 B&M Alco switcher**  
This unit is building a train on one of the long yard tracks used for arrivals and departures. B&M had HH660, S1, S2, S3, S4, and S5 models.

**9 Scale house**  
Until recent times, all yards of at least moderate size were equipped to weigh cars. The weigh rails are separate from the running rails, and cars to be weighed are diverted through switches while a crew member records the readings. On such scales the car must be uncoupled and alone on the weigh rails to be accurately weighed. Today, weigh-in-motion scales simplify the task.

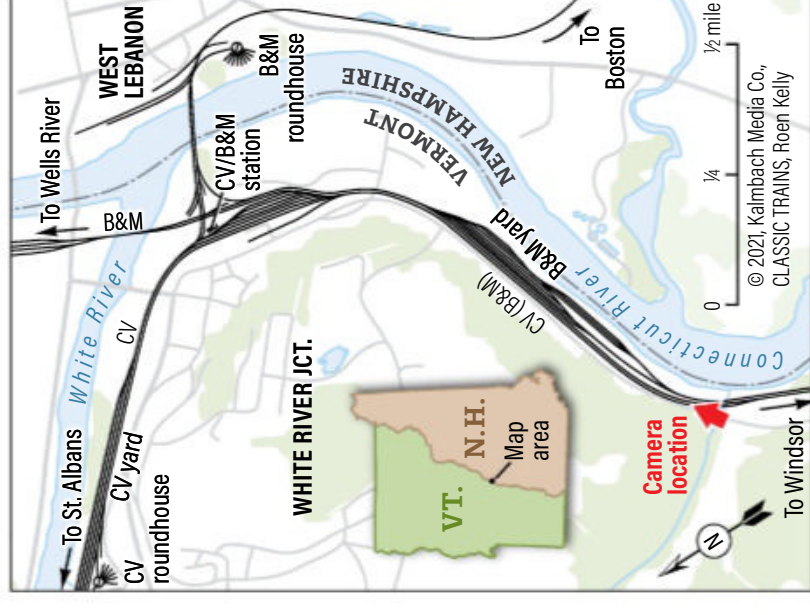
**10 B&M cabooses**  
In this era, cabooses were generally assigned to a particular conductor; brakemen would bid onto or off from that conductor's "car," and it was their lodging at an away-from-home terminal; home or away, yards had caboose tracks.

**11 Icing platform and its headhouse**  
Used for icing refrigerator cars before mechanical refrigeration was common on the railroad.

**12 Brake-shoe bin**  
Car inspectors had these in handy places. A primary task was to replace shoes when they found excess piston travel on brake cylinders.

*JERRY A. PINKEPANK, whose 50-year career as a railroad officer, consultant, and author spans key positions and projects at Burlington Northern, Soo Line, and BNSF, as well as numerous articles and books. A native of Lansing, Mich., Jerry now lives in Seattle, Wash.*

## White River Jct., Vt.





# TRANSITION<sup>at</sup>

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## WHEN THE PAST MASQUERADED AS THE FUTURE IN THE CABS OF TWO EARLY AMTRAK TRAINS // BY WILLIAM BENNING STEWART

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**THIS IS A STORY ABOUT** one of my favorite railroads (with emphasis on an especially interesting part of it), a favorite passenger train, and a favorite locomotive engineer — and the events that blended all three in a never-to-be-forgotten experience on the first day of 1972.

The favorite railroad was the Indianapolis–Kankakee segment of the New York Central’s Cincinnati–Chicago corridor, the northern half of the carrier’s Indiana Division. The especially interesting part was known as the TA Double — almost 23 miles of double track bracket-

ing Lafayette, Ind., that combined curving grades on both sides of the Wabash River bridge with an exhilarating stretch of tangent, high-speed running to the west.

Unknown to most riders of the numerous NYC passenger trains that traversed this line in its busiest years, almost all of the TA Double was the property of another railroad. Forerunners of the Nickel Plate Road built the original line and expanded it over the years to accommodate the Central’s predecessor companies through joint-trackage agreements. For more than a century this relatively

short, shared double track between Templeton and Altamont, Ind., was an intriguing — and busy — anomaly of Midwestern railroading. After World War II, host Nickel Plate was operating five regularly scheduled daily freights and extra “switch locals” across the TA Double, plus two Lima–Peoria daily passenger locals. Tenant New York Central, by comparison, operated as many as 12 scheduled passenger trains (down from a 1916 peak of 17) and 10 extra freight trains each day.

The favorite passenger train was the





# TEMPLETON

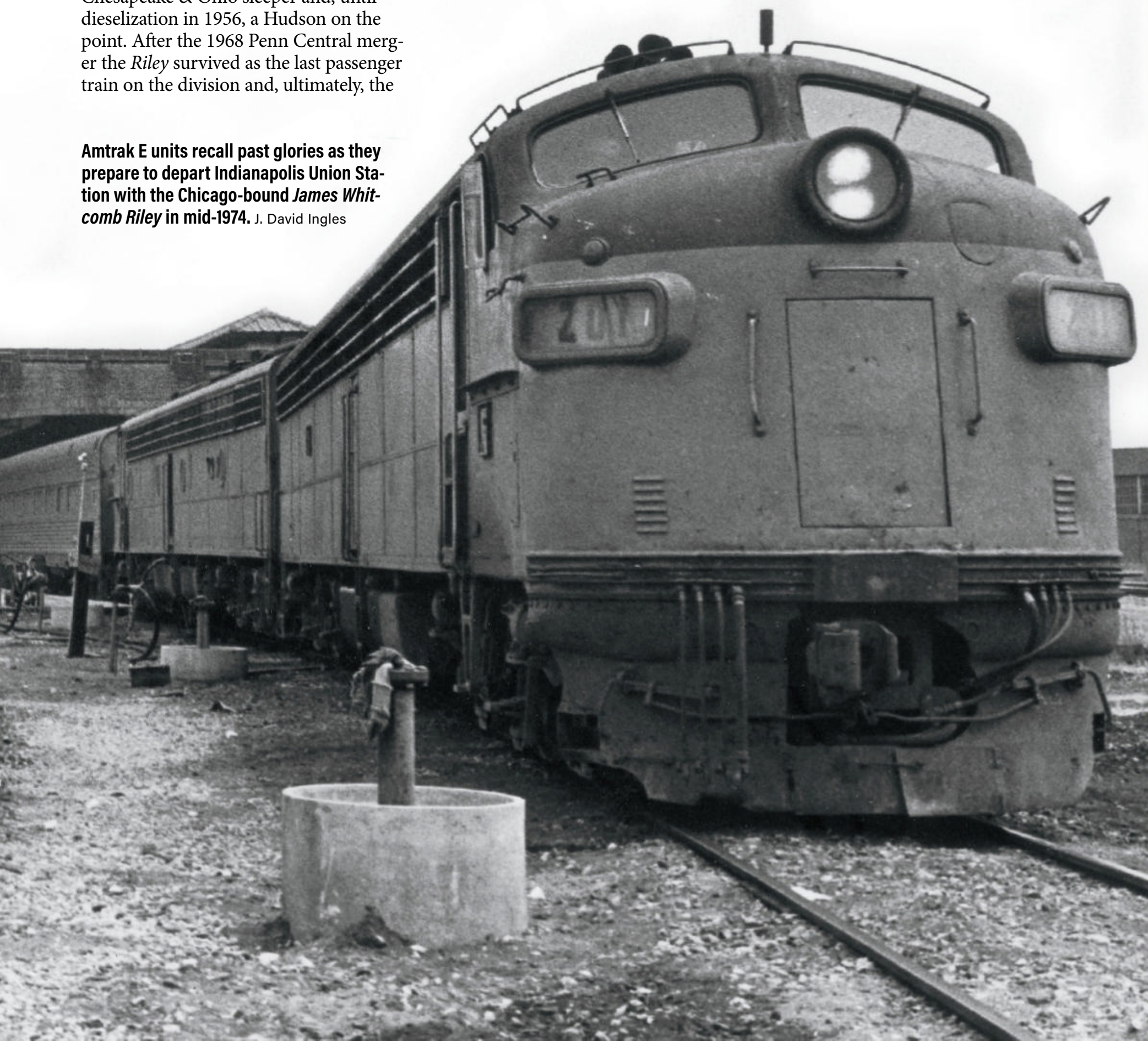
Central's *James Whitcomb Riley*, the Indiana Division's signature limited, inaugurated in 1941 and named for the state's poet laureate. Following a 1948 reequipping, the *Riley* featured an all-stainless steel consist of reserved-seat coaches, full dining car, and a round-end tavern-lounge-observation car, typically accented by a through Chicago-Newport News Chesapeake & Ohio sleeper and, until dieselization in 1956, a Hudson on the point. After the 1968 Penn Central merger the *Riley* survived as the last passenger train on the division and, ultimately, the

last named train on PC's ex-NYC lines.

And the favorite engineer: Charles P. McMahon, known to his many friends as "Bud." Articulate and well versed in many aspects of life, Bud was the proud patriarch of a large family and a respected Indiana Division engineman with diplomatic skills shaped through leadership roles in the Brotherhood of Locomotive

Engineers. By the mid-1960s he was one of the senior engineers on the *Riley* — and a valued acquaintance of those of us who maintained a small fleet of private passenger cars at Indianapolis Union Station. After Amtrak began operations in 1971, Bud continued to run both the *Riley* and the new *Floridian*, Amtrak's replacement for the former Seaboard

**Amtrak E units recall past glories as they prepare to depart Indianapolis Union Station with the Chicago-bound *James Whitcomb Riley* in mid-1974.** J. David Ingles





Coast Line-Louisville & Nashville-Penn Central *South Wind* train between Chicago and Miami.

## NEW YEAR'S ADVENTURE

An impromptu invitation to join Bud for a whirlwind cab-ride journey aboard those two trains brought Jay Williams, Dick Pearson, and myself to Union Station in the early morning hours of New Year's Day 1972. Shivering on a frosty platform, we watched in muffled anticipation as the bright headlight beam of the arriving *Floridian* illuminated the rafters and columns of the trainshed. After the long consist squealed to a stop, brief greetings were exchanged between incoming and outgoing engine crews before Bud ushered us up the cab ladder of a tarnished and tired ex-NYC E7.

Far down the lonely platform, a trainman stepped up to a sleeper vestibule and slammed the trap shut. Bud snapped off the cab lights and waited for the dwarf signal before us to flip from red to yellow-over-red. Releasing the brakes sent a shock wave of air through the cab, followed by the roar of three E units "loading up" beneath the trainshed.

As the *Floridian* picked its way through the snow-packed puzzle switches at the

**A view toward the setting sun from the rear of the eastbound *Riley* shows the convergence of ex-NKP (left) and ex-NYC lines at Templeton, west end of the TA Double.** John Fuller



west throat of the Union Station trackage, we cab visitors were pleased to see that our train was lined for the traditional Indiana Division routing to Chicago. Following the PC merger, most Chicago-bound passenger trains leaving Indianapolis were dispatched southwest on the former Pennsylvania Railroad St. Louis main to Davis Tower on the west side of the city, then north on the ex-PRR Indianapolis-Frankfort "I&F" division to Lebanon, where a cutoff descended from the elevated PRR to the original NYC route. At the dispatcher's discretion, however, trains could still be routed directly over the NYC "old way," as crews described it.

Departing the darkened city, Bud took a few more notches on the throttle

to reach mainline track speed and began tugging harder on the horn cord. The E7, past its prime, seemed to groan as its workload increased. The diesel still had its original, single-note air horn, and as its "Bammmmmmp" message reverberated off trackside buildings Bud observed that it sounded "like a lovesick bull moose."

Twenty years earlier, the steam-powered *Riley* had been scheduled to cover the 64.4 miles between Indianapolis Union Station and Lafayette in 62 minutes, including urban speed restrictions — fast running by any standard. Our already-late *Floridian* was carded for 90 minutes on this segment, and increasing numbers of slow orders created through Penn Central's deferred track mainte-







**Penn Central's westbound *James Whitcomb Riley* uses the connection between ex-PRR and NYC lines near Lebanon on November 15, 1970, 5½ months before Amtrak.** Jay Williams

**Lafayette's joint NKP-NYC station is framed in the windshield of an E unit on the westbound *Riley*. The depot, relocated to a new alignment, serves Amtrak today.** Jay Williams

nance added even more time to the trip.

We eventually reached the TA Double at Altamont and descended into Lafayette on the former Nickel Plate trackage (Norfolk & Western after 1964) as the first suggestions of dawn appeared in the eastern sky. During the station stop we three “deadheads” yielded to the realities of exhaustion and retreated to the two trailing ex-Louisville & Nashville E units for an hour or so of fitful cab-seat napping, unaided by increasingly bright morning sunlight and bumpy PC track west of Templeton.

Our destination city of Kankakee marked the western end of the Indiana Division. Here the NYC had joined the Illinois Central for trackage-rights operation to Chicago, and here the engine crews yielded their cabs to IC men, although conductors and brakemen continued on to the end of the runs at Central Station.

After the *Floridian* eased to a stop, we each made our way down the cab ladders, again offering greetings to men we didn't know — in this case, the IC crew ready to coax a strong performance out of the aged E7 and its mates for the high-speed dash to Chicago. It was easy to read the expressions on the faces of the IC men: “Who are these guys? Never saw them before!” Never would again, either.

Long before the train departed, our

group was rolling away in a taxicab, bound for the comforts of the seven-story Hotel Kankakee and five of its guest rooms. After much-needed sleep and hot showers, we reconvened in the hotel's dining room to feast from a New Year's Day buffet, another welcome addition to our itinerary.

Refreshed, cleansed, and nourished, we piled into another taxi and returned to the railroad, ready for the return trip — this time on Amtrak's interpretation of the *Riley*, which the new carrier had combined with the *George Washington* between Cincinnati and Washington. Now the train, confusingly, carried the old NYC name westbound and the former C&O name eastbound, prompting some wags to call it “The George Riley” or the “Riley/George.” To Indiana Division crews it was still simply “the Riley.” Whatever the name, the effects of Amtrak's “rain-

bow era” had become apparent as consists lengthened and once-foreign power and cars appeared, including ex-Great Northern and ex-Northern Pacific dome coaches, ex-C&O *Club*-series flat-end diner-lounge-observations and, occasionally, ex-Santa Fe dining cars.

When that evening's holiday-length version of the train — two E units and about 10 cars — rolled to a stop before us, Bud again exchanged warm greetings with an IC crew, and again Jay, Dick and I smiled and nodded.

“Who are these guys? Never saw 'em before.” Never would again, either.

## EASTBOUND TO INDY

Moments later we were huddled in the cab of ex-Baltimore & Ohio E8 1439, just in from a fast trip down the northernmost segment of the Illinois Central main line and ready to lead this hybrid Amtrak





train hundreds of additional miles on former NYC, NKP, and PRR trackage, finishing with stints on C&O and Southern. When two shrill chirps sounded from the trainman's communication whistle above his head, Bud bailed off the air and latched back the throttle. Darkness again descended upon our journey as we accelerated across the icy Kankakee River and turned toward home.

As we rolled through fallow farmlands

and a scattering of towns, I learned Bud had hired on at the NYC's Shelby Street roundhouse in Indianapolis in 1941, then served in the Army during World War II before settling into a four-decade career of firing and running every type of engine on the Indiana Division. What was his favorite? Hard to say, but it was difficult to beat a freshly shipped Hudson. Speed? Bud had received but one demerit for speed violation over his career, on a

memorable day when he gave Niagara 6008 ("the Sixty and Eight," as he called it) free rein with a late train, rushing across Indiana at 90-plus mph. "She wanted to run," he reasoned, "and I let her." Least favorite engines? No question: the baby-faced Baldwin cab units that could never be counted upon to make the schedule. "Junk the day they bought 'em," the veteran hogger declared. Current events? Bud was scornful of the entire Penn Central "scheme," as he called it, hopeful but pragmatic about the prospects for Amtrak.

Our conversation drifted back to Bud's earliest months on the railroad as a rookie fireman in 1941, soon after his graduation from Arsenal Technical High School in Indianapolis. I asked if he had known Chelsea Stewart, producer of the *Tech Sketchbook* student variety show. "Did I know him? He was my favorite teacher!"

I smiled and mentioned that he was also my father. Bud's head snapped toward me, his expression a blend of surprise and satisfaction. "You're Doc Stewart's son? Well, I'll be . . ." The cab fell silent for a moment as he turned his attention to the approaching home signal for the interlocking at Sheff, cornfield junction with the former NYC Chicago-Cairo "Egyptian line." Bud acknowledged two up-and-down flashes of the tower operator's lantern with two crisp blasts on the horn and closed the throttle for our passage over the diamond.

And then he stood up.

"All right," he said. "Let's see what Doc Stewart's boy can do with this thing."

I didn't need a second invitation. Sliding into the warm seat, reviewing the gauges, and looking down the track, I felt both excitedly aware of the rare opportunity I had just been given and yet completely at ease. "Give her a few notches, one at a time," Bud called out. The generator whined behind the wall separating the cab from the engine room and the speedometer began jiggling to the right as the 1439 responded to my commands.

Ahead, the lights of another small town twinkled in the winter darkness. "Some crossings coming up at Earl Park." The 1439's five-chime horn sounded louder and better than before when I pulled the rope swaying above the throt-



**A dozen miles west of Cincinnati, two former Pennsy E8s lead the "George Riley," as wags dubbed Amtrak's combined *George Washington/James Whitcomb Riley*, at Cleves, Ohio, on July 25, 1971. Dick Swaim**

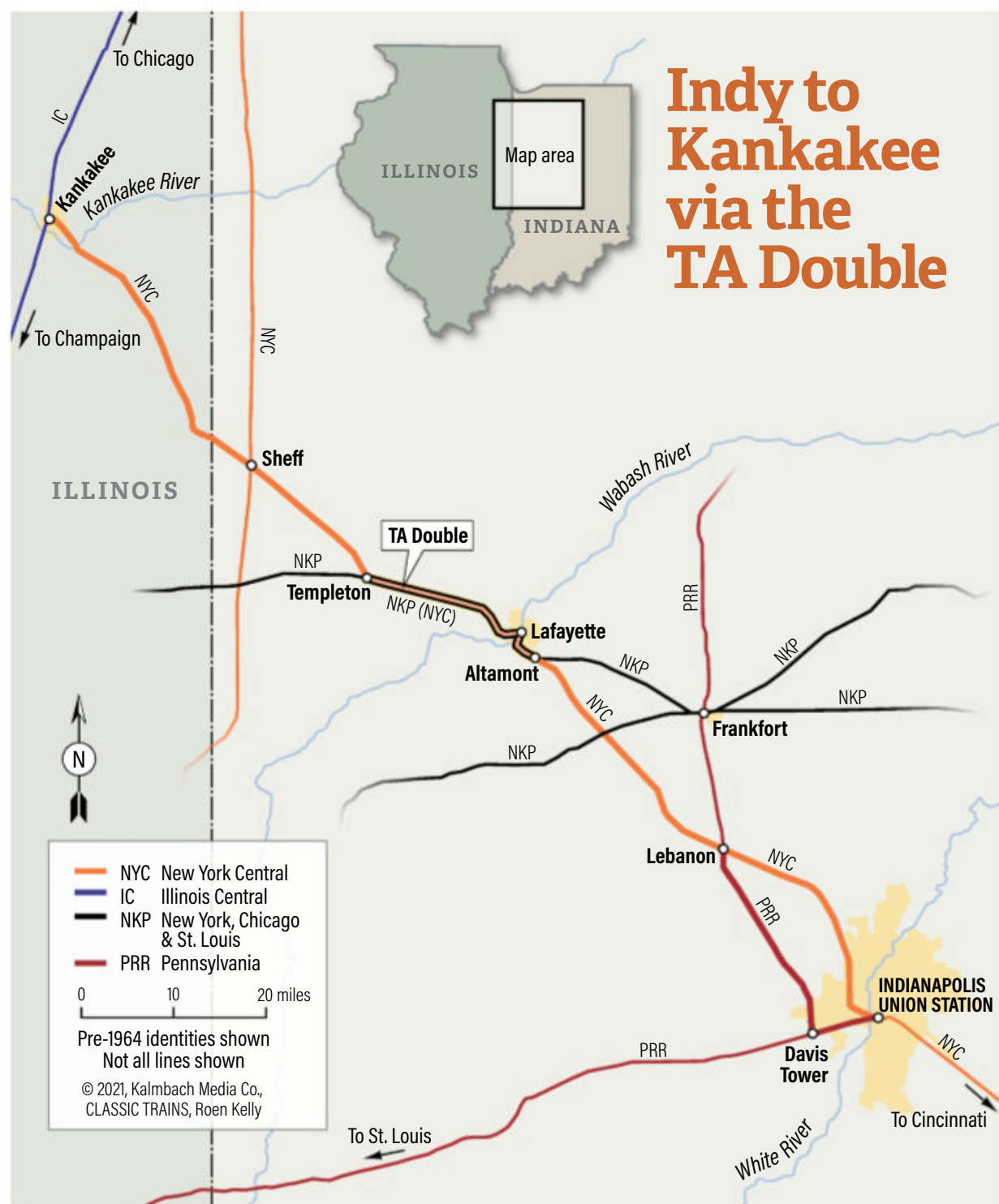




**NYC's Riley was one of the last stands of high-speed passenger steam operation in America. Hudson 5395 crests the hill out of the Wabash River valley at Summit, 1.8 miles west of Lafayette, in the early '50s.** Hal Lewis, Center for Railroad Photography & Art collection

tle stand. Now the journey, almost sleep-inducing moments before, had become a life-altering adventure, one requiring studied concentration on the tasks at hand while simultaneously creating a thrilling experience unknown to most inhabitants of our planet. Soon we were paralleling four-lane U.S. 52 through the town of Fowler, and suddenly there seemed to be more lights, buildings, cars, trucks, and other distractions than at any other time during the trip. I leaned forward in the seat and peered intently ahead, keeping the horn cord close at hand.

After another 10 miles of bouncing along the PC main, we slowed for the junction with the TA Double at Templeton. The figure of a block-station operator appeared in the distance, lifting a loaded train order hoop as we approached. While the 1439 rocked through the curve, Bud opened the side door behind me and leaned into the brisk evening air to snag the orders. "Open your window and wave to this guy," he said. As we rolled by, I returned the curious glance of the operator with a respectful nod; his expression mimicked those of the PC and IC engine-men I had met over the course of this escape. "Who's he? Never saw him before." Never would again, either.





The 1439, still carrying her racehorse spirit within, responded eagerly as I again followed Bud's directives, taking one throttle notch after another atop the smooth, ex-NKP trackage. I watched with satisfaction as the speedometer needle wiggled past 70. As each lonely road crossing came into view, I began pulling back on the horn cord with vigor, creating long, loud salutes to the memory of enginemen who had passed this way before.

Approaching an old wooden country-road overpass, Bud shouted in my ear, "Blow a highball as you go under the bridge, then wave." As the nose of the 1439 shot under the bridge, the headlight picked up a woman just beyond the right of way, restraining a dog on a leash with one hand and offering a friendly wave with the other. "She's there every night," Bud reported.

We raced on through the night with a sense that we were confidently riding a high-quality stretch of main line that would never end — and yet the seemingly interminable segment between Temple-

ton and the beginning of the descent to the Wabash River was only 17 miles long. As its end approached, I yielded my seat so Bud could set up the air for the curving ride down the hill to Lafayette.

In one of those incongruous moments that occur only occasionally in life, I realized that I had just operated my favorite passenger train at sustained high speed on the main line — but in another railroad's locomotive, on another railroad's track, almost four years after the NYC had succumbed in an unsuccessful merger and eight months after the train's pedigree had been transferred to a quasi-government operating agency.

Still — what an experience!

Later, Jay had his turn at the throttle between Altamont and the moment our fireman called out "Middle yellah!" for the red-over-yellow-over-red approach signal at the ramp to the former PRR I&F line. Dick subsequently enjoyed the pleasures of the engineer's seat on that "new way" routing between Lebanon and Davis. All too soon the late-evening lights of In-

dianapolis came into view through the 1439's curved windshields.

After we had descended from the cab at Union Station, thanked Bud for a once-in-a-lifetime experience, and watched the *George Washington* accelerate into the cold night, Dick effectively summarized the personal effect of our overnight odyssey. "Well," he reflected, "I can die now!"

### A MYSTICAL WORLD

Over a period of about seven hours in two locomotive cabs, aboard what were purported to be "new" trains, we had experienced firsthand a mystical world of traditional railroading, its longstanding parts and processes being skewed by contemporary political pressures, technological changes, and marketplace shifts. While the Chicago–Indianapolis–Cincinnati route appeared to be a likely corridor for continued passenger service, much of the trackage needed to sustain it now carried only a fraction of its pre-PC freight volume. By 1973 portions of the increasingly ill-maintained line were under slow

Ghost of the *James Whitcomb Riley*: Amtrak's *George Washington* departs Indianapolis Union Station for Cincinnati and points east in 1972. John Fuller





orders as restrictive as 10 mph, and the two Amtrak trains were moved to other routes. Most of the former NYC “old way” trackage between Indianapolis and Lafayette was incrementally abandoned between 1976 and ’85.

As Amtrak began acquiring new equipment, the E units and cars from our 1972 New Year’s Day consists also disappeared. Ex-B&O 1439, renumbered Amtrak 200 and repainted with a “bloody nose” red, platinum mist, and black paint job not long after our journey, was nevertheless retired on May 28, 1975. Concurrently, the aging streamliner-era cars began appearing on Amtrak’s equipment disposition lists.

Today, the Kankakee, Beaverville & Southern short line still operates the former *Riley* route west from Lafayette, but one of the two main tracks, the signals, the board-and-batten NKP stations, the old wooden overpass (plus the waving woman and her dog), the brick operator’s cabin at Templeton, and the high-speed, mainline flavor of the erstwhile TA Dou-



**B&O E8 1439 — the stage for author Stewart’s “life-altering adventure” in early 1972 — leads the *Capitol Limited* out of North Western Station, Chicago, in November ’69.** John H. Kuehl

ble are all gone. The KB&S also retained the ex-NYC trackage from Templeton to Kankakee, but the tower at Sheff was demolished years ago. So, too, was the once-elegant Hotel Kankakee. Bud McMahon, the gracious gentleman responsible for the adventure described here, passed way in 2008 at age 85.

When the 1439 accelerated away from Templeton and made transition that long-ago evening, it was carrying its occupants

through a storybook tale, one that blended railroading past and present with a strong hint of evolutionary events soon to occur. In effect, the early years of Amtrak were not a distinct introduction of the future but a temporary restraining order for the past, keeping some of the old equipment and a few of the old ways alive just a while longer. On that New Year’s Day, Bud McMahon’s three guests were to experience transitions of their own, each gaining an enhanced appreciation of many of railroading’s fleeting dimensions and traditions and a better understanding of the inevitability of change.

Thanks, Bud. Thanks for the memories — and the education. ■

*WILLIAM BENNING STEWART grew up in Indianapolis and made many journeys on the Riley with his parents in the 1950s and ’60s. Balancing a 30-year corporate communications career with avocational writing in transportation history, he has had bylines in numerous publications. This is his fifth article in CLASSIC TRAINS.*







# Finding FMs in Mexico

## An admirer of Fairbanks-Morse locomotives encounters them south of the border // BY TIM KERWIN

**T**HOSE OF US WHO BEGAN our railfanning in the 1950s experienced diesel locomotives built by four or even five builders, and naturally we would pick a favorite to root for, usually an underdog that didn't have EMD's market presence. TRAINS magazine during that time wisely refrained from any performance comparisons among builders, and this gave us the opportunity to like any locomotive

for whatever reason we wanted. For some reason, I was bitten by the Fairbanks-Morse bug.

This was a builder whose products included an exotic opposed-piston engine originally developed for use in submarines, a 2,000-h.p. freight locomotive built as early as 1947, and a five-axle passenger locomotive, so the firm had to be special. Although it had supplied equip-

ment to the railroad industry since the 19th century, FM did not enter the locomotive business as a builder until 1944. FM hood units had a rugged, pleasing appearance, influenced by famed industrial designer Raymond Loewy. FM units were rare in northeast Iowa where I lived, so my first sighting of three H16-44 road-switchers on a train on the Milwaukee Road's Mississippi River line at Dubuque, Iowa, was pure infatuation.

Around 1960 a friend of my father's who had visited his daughter in FM's factory town of Beloit, Wis., told him that FM was hiring people to build loco-



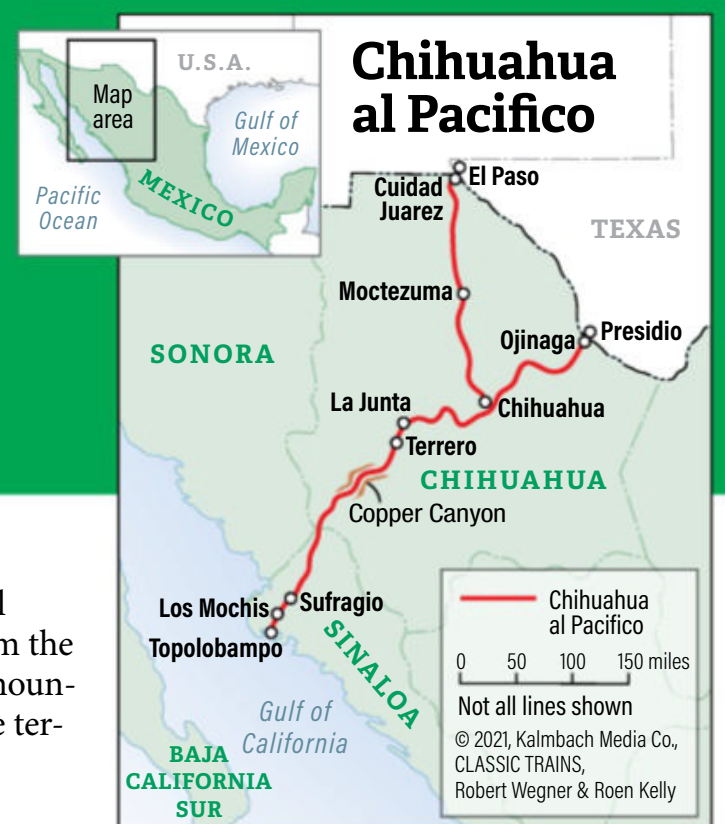


Just south of Dubuque, Iowa, two H16-44s lead a freight up the Milwaukee Road's line along the west bank of the Mississippi River in November 1956. MILW was a major FM customer. William D. Middleton



This photo of Chihuahua al Pacifico 600 in March 1961 **TRAINS** confirmed what author Kerwin heard the previous year about a group of Mexican locomotives being built at FM's Beloit plant. CLASSIC TRAINS collection

In January 1963, 11 months before author Kerwin's rides on the same route, ChP H16s 514 and 602 drum north with train 7 on the breathtaking Copper Canyon line. Everett L. DeGolyer Jr.



tives for a railroad in Mexico.

A year or so later, **TRAINS** published in its March 1961 issue a photo of a new H16-44 destined for Mexico's Chihuahua al Pacifico Railroad. ChP had recently completed its line from Ojinaga in the state of Chihuahua (across the Rio Grande from Presidio, Texas) through the spectacular Copper Canyon to Topolobampo on the Gulf of California in the state of Sinaloa.

An early-1960s family move to southern New Mexico gave me access to Southern Pacific FM switchers in El Paso, Texas, but the best was soon to come. In

December '63 I accompanied several family friends on a ChP journey from the city of Chihuahua through rugged mountains to Los Mochis, not far from the terminus at Topolobampo.

### **SOUTH TO FAIRBANKS COUNTRY**

We began our journey on a December morning in Chihuahua, quite cold because of the city's 4,800-foot elevation. Our train was two very new Fiat-built railcars. As we waited to depart, an FM switcher busied itself nearby — H12-44 No. 70, ChP's only FM switcher and the last switcher built by FM, in 1961.

Once underway, the first several hours took us through an arid part of Chihuahua, Mexico's largest state, before the mountains began. Numerous burros were on the track, requiring lots of horn-blowing and occasional slowing when they wouldn't clear the way. One particularly



Right: Chop-nosed 515 and unmolested sister 509 work a ChP freight at La Junta, Chihuahua, in March 1975. The ugly duckling made an impression on Kerwin in 1963.

Keith E. Ardinger

Below left: ChP Fiat railcars B2 and A2 stand at the Chihuahua station in July '64.

Below right: Built as ChP 70, the railroad's only FM switcher (and FM's last switcher for any customer, built in 1955) had become No. 301 by the time of this November '67 photo.



obstreperous burro stood staring at the oncoming train with his hind end on the track. A bump from the train gave him a message he hopefully wouldn't forget. Perhaps he was lucky that it was lightweight Fiat railcars rather than a massive FM locomotive that taught him his lesson.

Our first meet was at La Junta, a small town with a yard where the ChP line to the large city of Ciudad Juarez (across the Rio Grande from El Paso) joined the main line. An eastbound train waited in the yard with the spectacular sight of *four* H16-44s on the point in the ChP colors of orange with black bottom and roof. The clean, uncluttered lines on that string of FM hood units reminded me of a diagram used to teach perspective in drawing, where parallel lines converge neatly at some point in the distance. There are

few photos of more than three H16s in multiple on the U.S. railroads, and I knew I was seeing something special.

Our next meet at the town of Terrero produced another eastbound train with four H16s, but this one had a surprise. The lead unit had a low nose — TRAINS never told me about this! My first reaction was to be glad that FM was offering a product with the latest, increasingly popular, carbody configuration — didn't that indicate a future for the firm's locomotives?

My other reaction was to realize that this thing (which in fact was the handiwork of ChP's own shops) was *ugly*. It didn't seem very functional, either — the height of the nose was such that the engineer would have to stand up to see over the short hood. I was reminded that

when low-profile hood units were introduced, TRAINS had difficulty figuring out what to call them, sometimes using the term "chop-nose." H16 No. 515 fit that term to a "T."

After Terrero, the line passes through some 200 miles in rugged mountains, complete with the more than 80 tunnels and many spectacular bridges for which ChP's Copper Canyon line is famous. Our only meet in the mountains was eastbound passenger train 7, and I could make out only a few locomotives in the darkness as we approached our destination of Los Mochis.

The Fiat cars weren't running the day we made our return trip, so we took regular train No. 7. Power for the 12-car train was three H16s, led by low-nose 514. Soon after departing, we stopped on





The last locomotive constructed by Fairbanks-Morse, 1963-built ChP No. 604, looks sharp at the head of a passenger extra in early 1974. Four photos, Brian Schmidt collection

a siding at San Blas and saw some non-FM locomotive variety. After a wait, Ferrocarril del Pacifico passenger train 2, *El Yaqui*, passed by at high speed on its journey from Nogales to Guadalajara. Its locomotives were two Alco RSD12s, led by 3-year-old No. 513, painted green with yellow accents. These were serious, purposeful units, with bold yellow chevron stripes on the ends and train numbers mounted on the hood in the style of Southern Pacific, a past owner of the Pacifico. Seeing this train rush by made me wonder, *If Alcos can haul important Mexican passenger trains, why aren't they in more demand to haul at least freight in the U.S.?*

I have no memory of how the FM opposed-piston engines sounded as they climbed the mountains on our eastbound trip. I do remember that the H16s gave out large amounts of white exhaust, and on several occasions the smoke lingered in a canyon long enough to be seen after the train looped around to a higher elevation and passed close to where it had been.

The only meet on this journey was with a train of Fiat railcars, so my locomotive sighting was minimal. Hindsight tells me that somewhere along the line during our Mexican odyssey was 10-month-old H16-44 No. 604, but I wasn't diligent about recording all engine numbers then, and certainly didn't know that this would be the last locomotive built by Fairbanks-Morse.

### SUBSEQUENT SIGHTINGS

The years after this brought more FM sightings, with an occasional single H16 seen at the joint ChP-Nacionales de Mexico yard in Juarez. Service in the Navy assigned me in 1970 to the base at Norfolk, Va., with a Norfolk & Western coal storage yard nearby. Several pairs of dark-blue ex-Virginian H16s were always there, buried among the coal cars and shuffling them about. This was a different FM experience for me — rather than being the future of the railroad, the bedraggled units were its past, living out their last years.

Four years later in 1974 found me again at Los Mochis, this time to take the ChP Fiat railcars as part of a roundabout trip from Los Angeles to New Mexico. As I waited to board, I took a picture of two H16s coupled together outside the station. Once again, I was mesmerized by a low-nose unit, No. 514. However, behind these units is my “regret factor,” or opportunity cost, so familiar to railfans — the rare locomotive or unusual train that we missed when we chose to pursue the known object that was right in front of us.

My photo shows a third H16 behind the ones I photographed. It was ChP 531, a former Delaware, Lackawanna & Western unit (No. 935) that had toiled in northeastern Pennsylvania's cement belt in its early years. I was so taken by that low-nose H16 that I missed the earlier DL&W gem with the attractive headlight casing that early FM hood units pos-

sessed, and I'm still hard on myself for missing it. My later observations during the trip somewhat made up for this, as I saw two more H16s that had been purchased secondhand from U.S. railroads: 530 and a cannibalized 533, which had been DL&W 934 and New York Central 7012, respectively. ChP had purchased six H16s of DL&W origin and two original NYC units to supplement its fleet.

The years since then have produced excellent documentation of FM's attempts to break into the locomotive market, as well as comprehensive data on the diesels it produced. An example is Robert Aldag's seminal article in March and April 1987 *TRAINS*, which gives an insider's account of the mechanical shortcomings experienced by FM's engines as locomotive prime movers. The article tarnished the FM image a bit for me, but insights like this enrich our railfan experience. No amount of new information, however, can destroy my early admiration for Fairbanks-Morse locomotives, from the days when I thought the firm's future was as bright as the Chihuahua sky. ■

*TIM KERWIN, 74, grew up in a small Iowa town served by four railroads. He misses the variety of that time, but recognizes that the information available to railfans today far exceeds the past. This enriches our picture of classic-era operations, but also enables greater appreciation of today's scene. This is Tim's first CLASSIC TRAINS byline.*



# Plowing snow for Conrail

Despite cold weather and long hours, a young engineering trainee loved “working on the railroad”



**I started my 35-year railroad career as a** Conrail Engineering Management Trainee on a sunny June 15, 1977 at Williamsport, Pa. Only eight days before, I received my civil engineering degree at the University of Delaware. During the in-between time, I bought a car, packed some clothes, and said goodbye to friends and family. I was ready for this new adventure that I had dreamed about since I was 7 years old: working on the railroad!

I spent the remainder of 1977 in many departments installing ties, inspecting track and bridges, installing signal bond wires, riding trains (I was in heaven!), performing track inspections, doing paperwork (even this was exciting), surveying, and of course, drinking coffee. The latter was an ever-present part of the daily routine, and knowing the best places to get a cup on the division was paramount.

As part of the program, our trainee class took trips around Pennsylvania to visit the engineering department offices

in Philadelphia, the hump yard at Enola, the rail-welding plant at Lucknow, and the locomotive and car shops in Altoona. On these trips, we swapped stories (over beers at the hotel bar) about our territories, skills acquired (how many hammer swings did it take to drive a spike fully into a tie), how to make out an expense account (what did “Excelsior not available” mean?), and “characters” that we worked with. Even after six months, I awoke every morning looking forward to “working on the railroad.”

I finished out 1977 heading home to spend Christmas with family and catch up with friends. By New Year’s Day, I was chomping to get back to Williamsport to resume my “railroad career,” even though I was just a trainee.

During January and February 1978, Williamsport experienced two blizzards that piled up snow caused by winds blowing it into tall drifts, and temperatures staying below freezing day and night. You

**In a February 1978 view from the cab of a Jordan spreader on snowplow duty, Conrail GP40 3033 pushes at Hyner, Pa., 7 miles east of Renovo on the ex-PRR Buffalo line along the Susquehanna River.** Fran Giacomini

know what this meant on the railroad: Bring out the snow-fighting equipment! In the words of Kent Dorfman, a.k.a. “Flounder” from the movie *Animal House*, “Oh boy, is this great!” I could not wait to get assigned to snow-fighting duty on a plow or flanger. That dream started to fizzle when my first assignment was riding with a contractor in a pickup truck as he plowed the snow off of the many grade crossings in Williamsport. But it got a whole lot better!

After the mid-January snowfall of close to 20 inches, I was told to go with a track department crew to operate a snowplow from Newberry Yard in Williamsport east to Watsontown and plow the Watsontown Secondary. This branch line connected with the former Pennsylvania





CR snowplow 60002 stands with GP38 7854 and GP38-2 8013 at South Williamsport, Pa., in January 1978. This is the "off" side of the double-track plow. Fran Giacomia

Railroad Harrisburg–Buffalo line at Watsonstown and went 15 miles east to the Pennsylvania Power & Light (PP&L) plant at Strawberry Ridge. It was laid with welded rail and contained very few grade crossings and curves. The coal-fired plant received a couple of unit trains per week composed of two six-axle locomotives and PP&L 100-ton hopper cars. It was an important line that had to be operable, no matter what the weather!

I boarded a double-track-style snow plow that was followed by a nose-to-nose GP38/GP38-2 pair and a classic ex-PRR caboose. We got under way early afternoon with the adventure going well as we cruised along, throwing the snow to one side of the track. What did not go so well was the heater in the plow. It was an oil-fired unit (like the ones used to heat cabooses) located near the operator's cupola. Within 3 feet of it you could stay warm; beyond that, you froze. With the train moving between 10 and 20 mph, the air coming through the gaps of the plow body made it even worse. I could not stay warm even though I was heavily dressed and constantly trying to keep my balance in the pitching, rocking, bucking plow. I got lucky and spent some time in the operator's cupola where, besides getting to raise and lower the flanger, I got to warm up.

After turning our train at the power plant, we headed west back to Watsonstown, then back to Williamsport. As this train was going to plow all the way up to Lock Haven, I had the crew drop me off at the Maynard Street grade crossing in Williamsport. It was nearly 3 a.m. when I stepped off the plow into snow about 2

feet deep and trudged through it a half-mile to my apartment. I fell onto the couch fully clothed, and drifted off to sleep with the rocking of the plow, the smells of heating oil, and visions of snow flying through the air.

Despite the long, cold hours being out plowing snow, on derailments, and cleaning switches, I was still having a ball! Then another big storm hit the region in early February. I was assigned to Bill Klein, Assistant Production Engineer, to head to Renovo to operate a Jordan spreader. We would proceed south on the Buffalo Line to clear away snow drifts between Renovo and Williamsport, especially through the mountain cuts at Hyner Run. Bill had me sleep overnight at his home in Lock Haven (his wife and family were used to him bringing home "railroad strays" for dinner or early morning starts) so we could leave at 5 a.m. to meet the work train at 7 in Renovo.

**Despite the long, cold hours being out plowing snow, on derailments, and cleaning switches, I was having a ball!**

After getting coffee — the strongest I have ever had, even to this day — at the Renovo YMCA (where the train crews stayed), we boarded the spreader and started plowing south with the power being a GP40. A gondola was placed between the spreader and the locomotive to protect the train crew in case we rammed something. Inside the spreader cab, Bill manned the controls so he could raise the plow or retract the wings as I called out upcoming obstructions like mileposts, signals, or flanger signs.

The weather was clear, about 20 degrees, with a light wind. We were plowing along the single track at 20 mph through Hyner Run, with the wings spread out, when we hit a bank of snow that was cov-

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CR plow 60002 carries a PRR steam-era headlight at Turbotville, Pa., in January '78. Fran Giacomini

ering a solid block of ice. With a loud crunch, we immediately dropped to 5 mph with both of us being thrown forward. I looked back at the engineer and his eyes were wide open with an *Oh crap!* expression. About 10 seconds later we started accelerating back up to speed. We did not derail the spreader or damage the pistons that still kept the wings out.

Bill thought it was great, and with an unlit cigar in his mouth and twinkle in his eyes, shouted to me “All ahead one-third, Franny!” I grinned and held on, resuming my lookout.

By late afternoon, we reached Williamsport, where the train was turned on the wye to head back to Renovo. Bill stayed with the train and I got off at Lock Haven Yard to get my car to drive back to my apartment in Williamsport. I finally warmed up enough later to get to sleep so I could enjoy another day of “working on the railroad.” — *Fran Giacomini*

## View from a caboose

A ride on the rear of a Toledo, Peoria & Western freight was an education in the rigors of railroading



A Toledo, Peoria & Western RS2 adds the caboose to Fort Madison-bound freight 121 in the East Peoria yard. Bon French

**In the late 1960s and into the '70s, I had numerous rides** on Toledo, Peoria & Western freight trains in both directions out of Peoria, Ill., where I grew up. The TP&W interchanged with the Pennsylvania Railroad and its successors 108 miles east at Effner, Ind., and with the Santa Fe 114 miles west in Fort Madison, Iowa. (TP&W rails didn't reach Fort Madison, but joined the Santa Fe at Lomax, Ill., from where TP&W trains ran about

16 miles west to the interchange point.)

My friends and I discovered that through a quirk in the TP&W's permission to abandon passenger service in the 1940s, the Interstate Commerce Commission had requested that they carry people who still wanted to ride. Passengers would be accommodated in the caboose. I recall that the fares were very low and often the crews didn't even want to fuss with actually selling you a ticket,

but gave you permission to ride regardless, after signing the appropriate release.

Of course, we really wanted to ride in the engine and not the caboose, and most of the time the crews obliged. But one time in the summer of 1970 we had a crew that wanted to stick with the rules, so we had to ride in the caboose. This was on train 121 to Fort Madison, which was fun because we got to ride the high iron of the Santa Fe at 60 mph for the





**The caboose's rear door frames the Illinois River bridge of terminal road Peoria & Pekin Union, over which the TP&W ran between East Peoria and Peoria. The ladder at left likely saved author French's life the next day.** Bon French

final miles to Fort Madison.

We stayed overnight and returned with the same crew the next day (also in the caboose). I learned two very important lessons about railroading that day.

One was that 8 hours of rest did not mean 8 hours of sleep. The required 8-hour rest period between runs started the minute we stepped off the train in Fort Madison and ended when we reboarded very early the next morning. This meant that getting to the hotel, eating dinner, going to bed, eating breakfast, and getting back to the yard were all part of "rest." The crew had the crew caller wake us along with them about 4 a.m., so in practice we got only about 4 hours of sleep.

By the time we rolled east out of town on No. 122, the sun was dawning on a beautiful summer day. A few hours into our ride home (I remember being in the cupola at this point), I found it impossible to stay awake. Riding in the locomotive was somewhat different in that there was a lot of engine noise, crews calling signals, whistle blowing, and so on. Staying awake up there was easier. Back in the caboose, it was relatively quiet, and the rocking of the train and the lack of sleep made it simply impossible for me to be alert. I realized then that crews worked



**Seen from the cupola, the caboose stove's stack stands tall amid cornfields.** Bon French

in this sleep-deprived state on a regular basis, creating potentially dangerous situations. I talked with them about it, and they just said they learned to live with it. But trying to stay awake is not something one can easily force yourself to do. That was Lesson No. 1.

Lesson No. 2: To get some fresh air and stay awake, I decided to stand out on the back platform of the caboose. The crew admonished me to be careful, which I took seriously. And a good thing too, since before long I heard a big clattering sound coming at me, which I knew to be

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slack running out. I was already holding onto the handrails, which probably saved my life. The caboose lunged forward with a massive jerk, throwing me into the ladder that led to the roof. The slack action came so fast that there was no time to react once you heard it, and there was no way I could have stayed on my feet without holding on to something. I could have easily been thrown off the rear of the train. I never knew it could be that violent.

For the rest of the trip, I made sure never to move around the caboose without holding onto something. I had had a big scare. The west end of the TP&W travels through up-and-down country unlike the east end, which is essentially flat once you climb out of the Illinois River valley. There were a few more slack run-ins and run-outs during our trip



**Coming off the Mississippi River bridge into Fort Madison, TP&W 121 meets a Santa Fe train accelerating out of town.** Bon French

home, but I was prepared for them.

After that ride, whenever I was track-side watching a caboose go by, I had a newfound respect for the very real dangers therein. — *Bon French* 📷

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New Englanders George C. Corey and his late friend Stanwood K. Bolton masterfully documented the late steam and early diesel era in their home area and beyond

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## What's in a Photograph?

Santa Fe diesels and a wreck train at Barstow, 1975

## Buffalo's Blizzard of '77

Railroads on the east shore of Lake Erie, battered by many weeks of snow and cold, finally buckled under the weight of a monster storm

## Best of Everything

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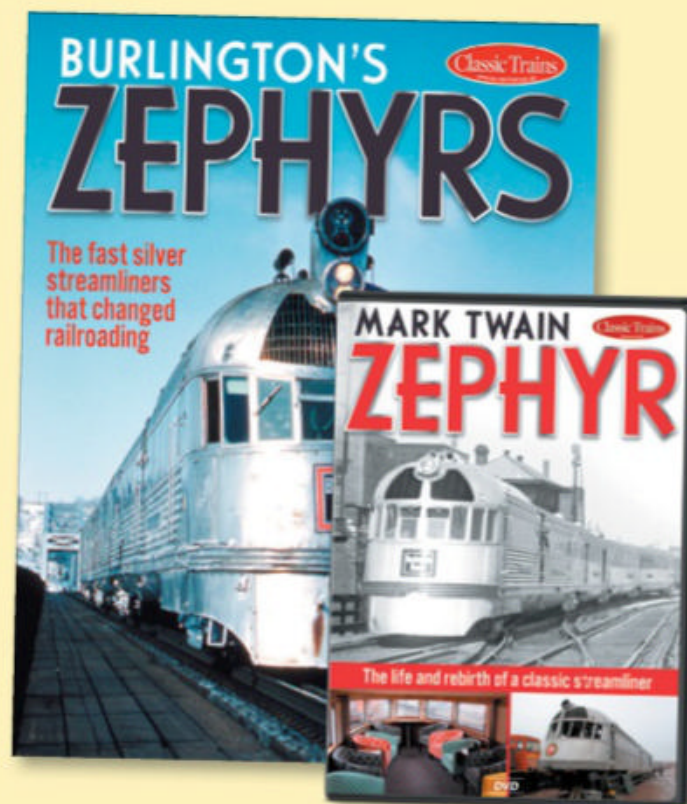
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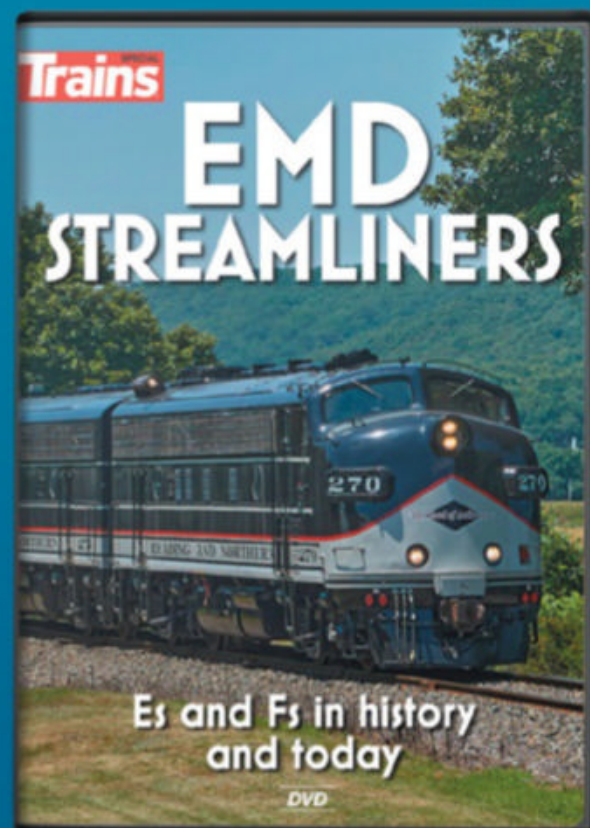
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# R&LHS turns 100

It's the granddaddy of all U.S. rail-history organizations

BY DAN CUPPER

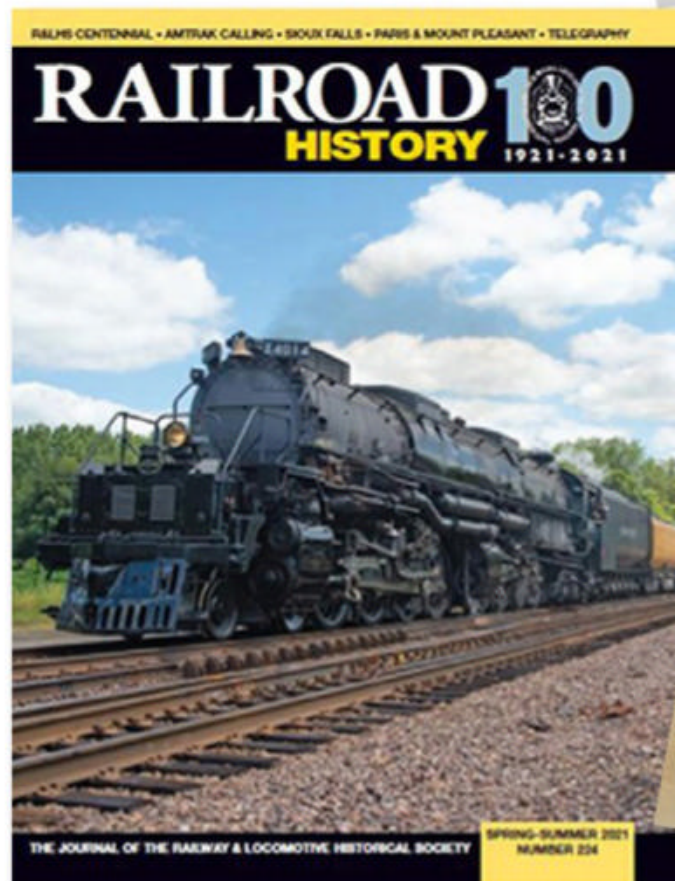
**Among railroad history and preservation organizations,** most groups are relative newcomers. Many of the large crop of railroad-specific clubs got their start in the 1960s and '70s as much-beloved regional roads were merged or abandoned.

The B&O Railroad Museum is one of the better known institutions, having been formed by the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad itself in 1953. The Seashore Trolley Museum opened in 1939. Largest of the national groups, the National Railway Historical Society originated in 1935. Both the New York and Massachusetts chapters of the Railroad Enthusiasts date to 1934.

But the elder statesman is the Railway & Locomotive Historical Society, which this year celebrates the centennial of its 1921 founding. R&LHS claims to be the oldest rail-history organization in North America and one of the oldest anywhere dedicated to the history of technology.

Never placing among the larger groups, R&LHS counts a membership of about 2,200, drawn from railroad management, academia, the museum and library worlds, and history-minded railfans. Its 10 regional chapters are but a fraction of the dozens fielded by the NRHS, but chapters are just one element of the whole.

R&LHS's first priority is *Railroad History*, a semi-annual journal that began in 1921 as a modest pamphlet known simply as *The Bulletin*. Over the years, it has been guided by such personages as professor H. Roger Grant; historical consul-



**Noted railfan/industrial designer Otto Kuhler created the R&LHS logo. The first issue of the society's journal contrasts with the latest one, which features Big Boy 4014, saved in 1962 by an R&LHS chapter.** All images, R&LHS collection

tant Peter A. Hansen; writer Mark Reutter; and John H. White Jr., retired curator of transportation at the Smithsonian.

It was White who, upon becoming editor in 1972, rebranded the journal as *Railroad History* to reflect its mission more accurately. It has grown from a 6x9-inch, 16-page publication to a full-color 128-page production.

Over the years, R&LHS's leadership has drawn from a spectrum of historians, railroaders, academics, and preservationists. Among the previous presidents are professor (and acclaimed photographer) J. Parker Lamb and B&O/CSX railroader Bill Howes; the current president is Robert

Holzweiss, who in his day job serves as deputy director of the George H.W. Bush Presidential Library & Museum in Texas.

For its first 50 years, R&LHS and its journal were overseen by founder Charles E. Fisher (1889–1972), a New Englander who is alternately remembered as either aloof and coldly efficient, or friendly and cooperative, freely sharing information and photographs. His sometimes heavy-handed methods drove away some people, who then formed rival groups.

In its early years, the organization collected thousands of railroad artifacts and displayed them at Harvard University's Baker Library in Cambridge, Mass. When the group lost that space in 1981, much of the collection was relocated to Cape Cod's Edaville Railroad, which then declared bankruptcy in 1992.

This brought a moment of reckoning, when the R&LHS board decided that it didn't possess the staff, skills, facilities, or finances to maintain a museum. The large hardware in the collection was auctioned off, while photos, lithographs, prints, records, and books were consolidated at the California State Railroad Museum



**An R&LHS chapter was essential to the founding of the California State Railroad Museum (above). For decades the society displayed items at Harvard University's library (right).**





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in Sacramento. R&LHS's Pacific Coast Chapter had been the cornerstone in the founding of CSRM, with its collection of locomotives and cars becoming the core of the museum's roster.

Along the way, some R&LHS chapters actively operated fan-trip excursions. Among the most notable events was a 1937 Open House at the Pennsylvania Railroad's Altoona (Pa.) Shops. The New York and Chicago chapters took the lead in running two chartered trains from New York/Philadelphia and one from Chicago. With the freight railroads' exit from the passenger business at the coming of Amtrak in 1971, excursions became harder to arrange, and that activity declined to almost nothing.

It's hard to imagine what Fisher would think of today's R&LHS, which is chiefly known for three achievements. First, its national body continues to publish *Railroad History*, which surveys the railroad scene in historical, cultural, and technical context. The group also provides annual awards for books, articles, photography, videos, and lifetime achievement. It also offers research grants for historians, and last year began a scholarship program for upper-level undergraduates and graduate students in rail history and engineering.

Second, as noted, the Pacific Coast Chapter was more than instrumental in the creation of California's world-class railroad museum, one of just four such state-owned facilities in the United States.

And third, as of 2019, another chapter helped bring railroad history to life for a whole new generation of Americans.

R&LHS's Southern California Chapter maintains its own public display of equipment, called RailGiants Museum, near



In 1949, when rail trips were a major part of R&LHS activities, a special departs Brewster, Ohio, on Wheeling & Lake Erie.



Los Angeles. One of its prized pieces was Union Pacific 4-8-8-4 Big Boy 4014, which UP had donated in 1962. The Big Boy class represents by many measures the largest and most powerful type of steam locomotive ever built. Of the 25 constructed between 1941 and '44, seven survive as museum pieces. The eighth is the 4014, which the chapter agreed to trade back to UP, which had deemed it to be the best candidate for a return to operating condition in its heritage steam fleet.



**Charles E. Fisher led R&LHS 1921-72.**

UP reacquired the engine in 2013 and restored it over several years, steaming it up to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the driving of the Golden Spike — marking the completion of the first transcontinental railroad — in May 2019. Later that year it toured UP territory, being seen by more than 1 million people throughout the Midwest and West; another tour is set for August-September 2021. Thus, thanks to an R&LHS chapter, an exciting episode of living history has been written anew.

And what of the future? Steam programs tend to be tenuous, and even museums can come and go. But given the odds, R&LHS's *Railroad History* and its other programs are likely to be around for some time to come. ■

*DAN CUPPER, a retired Norfolk Southern locomotive engineer and author of scores of articles in TRAINS and CLASSIC TRAINS, is editor of Railroad History.*

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*Right:* In September 1950, eight cars of three types populate the Ogden terminal, shared with the Utah Idaho Central until the latter quit in 1947. *Bottom right:* Car 354 heads toward Salt Lake City's Latter Day Saints Temple (beyond smoke-stack at right center) near the end of its run from Ogden in August 1950. *Bottom middle:* "Bullet" 128, seen in September 1950, was one of five Brill lightweights BRR acquired from New York's Fonda, Johnstown & Gloversville in 1939. *Bottom left:* In July 1948, home-built motor 530 has hold of an SP boxcar at 23rd and Lincoln in Ogden. *Below:* Cars 301 and 322 meet at Centerville, 11 miles north of downtown Salt Lake, in September 1950. Clockwise from right: George Krambles, W. C. Janssen, H. M. Stange, B. L. Stone, George Krambles; all from Krambles-Peterson Archive









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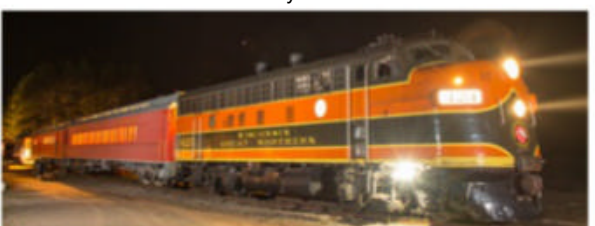
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# Southern at Knoxville

**Southern Railway 4-8-2 No. 1492** lays down sand as it departs the road's depot at Knoxville, Tenn., with train 26, the *Memphis Special*, on September 21, 1938. Flanking the Mountain type are sister 1471 (right), which brought the train in from the west, and an elderly 0-6-0 switching freight car. Opened in 1903, the station was built to plans by architect Frank Pierce Milburn, who designed public buildings throughout the South including stations at Salisbury, N.C.; Savannah, Ga.; Lynchburg, Va.; and Hattiesburg, Miss. The Knoxville structure lost its ornate clock tower in 1945, and saw its last train in 1970 when the *Birmingham Special* was discontinued, leaving the city without rail passenger service (Louisville & Nashville, whose station was a half-mile away, dropped service in 1968). Now housing offices, the Southern terminal anchors a large historic district. Photo: Walter H. Thrall Jr.



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